A Pilgrimage To The Light

(English)

A Pilgrimage to The Light

(Biography of Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios)

Joice Thottackad

Translated by

George Joseph Enchakattil

First Edition: Nov. 24, 2020

Published by Gregory of India Study Centre for the glory of God and for the benefit of humankind.

Distributed by Sophia Books, Kottayam Mob: 70122 70083, 99471 20697

Cover, Type Setting & Printing: Sophia Print House, Kottayam

Price Rs. 600/-

A Pilgrimage To The Light

Joice Thottackad

Translated by

George Joseph Enchakattil

Sophia Books
Kottayam

Foreword

Fr Dr. K. M. George

Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios was an intellectual extra ordinary, but seemed unapproachable to ordinary men and women. This prevented many people from moving close to His Grace. Yet, those people going to His Grace without any preconceptions, possessing an open and clear mind found him approachable and friendly. This being the truth, small children who had no pre-conceived notions were the best friends of his Grace.

Mar Gregorios was always searching for things or issues those were not common. His Grace stayed away from day to day dealings of common nature as also from routine affairs too ordinary. He was not part of silly talks those entertained the ordinary men and women in their social life. However, His Grace was keen to interfere with the problems confronted by the common people and had no reservations to mingle with them. His Grace took initiatives to comprehend the problems of the neglected men and women as well as those of the aborigines.

Mar Gregorios recalls in his autobiography that a big sized head and a small sized body did not match his physique the right way. His body was too ordinary. It was weak and easily susceptible to illness. This body was subject to excessively volatile expressions of anger. "Tireless intellect and incessant flow of ink in a golden pen" found it very difficult to align with that body. His Grace was often angry to his own physique and the surroundings as also with other men around him as his body was slow in responding to the splendid and impatient mental faculties formulated through transcendental visions. This missing harmony between his faculties was the source of many controversies others saw in him.

Mar Gregorios was looking forward to a soft touch of the Almighty with real perception of emotional clashes within his inner faculties holding on to an agitated sustenance of the interior man, similar to men of unassailable intellect like St Paul and St Augustine. Surrounding the external personality of His Grace, there hung coarse veils folded

many times, but inside these veils, a spark of fire was glowing that was nothing but personified humility with a richness of affection, warm for all. His Grace perceived it as an invaluable gift from ever-merciful God. Therefore, he never attempted to justify the controversies in his individuality; neither His Grace wanted anyone to justify them. This is truthfulness of a man.

We should not discard an adolescent boy from our memory who possessed a zealous wish to be a good disciple of Jesus Christ doing good things to others. This boy's self-induced and enlightened desire brought him out of the comfort and luxury of a power dominant royal palace as well as the tempting ways of Western culture, to be with the ordinary men and women; thus, Mar Gregorios returned to his own people to be with them in their needs and their lack of knowledge. His Grace was a man who could have occupied top positions in many leading global forums; but he did not forget his roots. He had greater concern for the issues confronting his country and his Church to think about enthusiastically. His Grace raised questions to himself and attempted to provide answers. It is no wonder for a community having no questions and therefore not comprehending the meanings of such questions and answers.

Mar Gregorios possessed inner faculties those were in continuous vigil like eyes sans eyelids. Whatever happens around us, Mar Gregorios familiarized himself with the events and ideas, their interior and exterior, their top and bottom, their height and depth and their past and future. His Grace was intelligent enough to analyze the variations those go beyond our three dimensional conceptualities; but these rare experiences of complexities simultaneously enthused and pained his heart. We have here the veiled desires and disappointments of a man who had a thirst to do something for his people.

Mr. Joice Thottackad is providing here an excellent window for us to peep into the life experiences of Mar Gregorios Metropolitan, through his book 'A Pilgrimage to The Light.' The author does not claim this work as a biography in its true sense. This work indeed is a witnessing of his personal commitment to Mar Gregorios apart from the research talents and hard work of Joice Thottackad which

includes portions from the auto biography of His Grace, other writings, letters, opinions of those who had closely acquainted with His Grace and many interviews with the Metropolitan. As Joice says, this volume contains many documents that would be useful to anyone who carries out research works on Mar Gregorios in future.

Before completing his autobiography, Mar Gregorios Metropolitan left for heavenly abode. Yet, those few chapters His Grace wrote unveiling his adolescent and youth period are sufficient to reveal the richness of that fruitful and noble life. In a way, one can comprehend that incomplete autobiography as a symbol of his unfinished life. The thoughts and plans His Grace visualized about a new humanity are longing for fulfillment. These are continuous invitations to his vast and wide discipleship to initiate completion thereof. There are many among us working keenly to fulfill that vision of life. This noble volume is such an attempt from Joice Thottackad. Fr. C. C. Cherian and Prof. K. M. Tharakan had been close associates of Mar Gregorios since many years; they have already published short biographies of His Grace which in no way reduce the relevance of this volume. Since many valuable documents are forming part of this, those who undertake research studies in future would find this useful. There are many unpublished writings and letters of Mar Gregorios. It has already been decided to collect all of them and publish at an early date by Mar Gregorios Foundation functioning under Orthodox Theological Seminary. This volume by Joice provides a few hints to such vast collections.

Mr. Joice Thottackad engages himself in research works and freelance journalism; with this voluminous work he deserves congratulations and gratitude of all those who love and respect His Grace. Let everything end up well.

Orthodox Theological Seminary
Kottayam
October 11, 1997

1

Pilgrimage Sets Off

October 1947. Just about two months since India has become an independent nation. It was yesterday, Dr Paul Puthooran, the well-known physician from Ernakulam passed away. Funeral was at 10:00 am. The man had walked normally to the club carrying his Tennis racket, but collapsed at the gate consequent to a cardiac arrest.

Paul Varghese was waking ahead through Shanmugham Road with a friend after taking part in the funeral service. During those days, Shanmugham Road was close to the lake. Sitting on the short compound wall separating Shanmugham Road from the lake, you had fascinating and heart touching sceneries on the west. The abundance of coconut trees in the tiny islands of Bolghatty Palace and Ponjikkara, the slowly dancing waves of the lake surface, the lake merging into the sea far away, Wellington Island slightly on the south, Menaka Theatre on the opposite side of the road.[1] Paul Varghese kept walking, possessing a disturbed mental set up like the movements of the waves, not caring all these beauties of nature; he was probably holding on to some philosophical insights on all those happened.

"Human life is momentary. Wherever you turn, you come across death. If so, what is the meaning of this life? What is the purpose of this life?"

Death…What does it mean? Is it the ultimate sorrow of life? Is life comfortable until the advent of death? No, life is intermingled with joy and sorrow. If so, how does it mean that death is the ultimate sorrow?

This looks like the commencement of a search. Or else, continue with the vocation with Postal Department, discarding all sorts of disturbing thoughts hovering around you. Is it possible? All facilities are there, awaiting you.

Now, if you go for a search, how far should it be? Should it be just

to create an impression of a search that inculcates a sense of satisfaction as many do; then retire into self with such an image of having searched? This is senseless. More than such a satisfaction, the dissatisfaction ending with a search is far better.

Paul Varghese and his friend slowly stepped into the Radio Shop of Mathew Choolackal on Shanmugham Road.

Paul Varghese was an employee with Post & Telegraph Department. He was a Trade Union leader too. While thinking and discussing on varying aspects and viewpoints of life, Mathew enquired: "I have to go to Alwaye now. Would you join? We can return by noon time." "I am ready; just stepping into your car and sitting leisurely. I have to report for duty by 2'o clock." "That is fine. Even I have to return fast and have lunch at home."

Indeed, Paul Varghese wanted a change after the funeral service. Therefore, he expressed his willingness instantly. At this time, an official from the nearby office of Indian Airlines came to Mathew with a foreigner. After formal introductions, the official requested Mathew to guide the visitor how to take a bus to travel to Alwaye. Mathew responded: "We are about to travel to Alwaye in car now; there is a delay of just about ten minutes. The car is a small one. If you don't find it uncomfortable, you may join us."

Paul Varghese utilized these ten minutes to ask a hundred questions to the visitor. Though this man Dr Robert N Thompson was a Canadian, he was working in Ethiopia. He had come to India from Ethiopia on some diplomatic requirements. Varghese found it interesting to gather information about Ethiopia and Emperor Haile Selassie. They discussed the life of the people of Ethiopia, their language, their Emperor, the Italian atrocities and so on.

Paul Varghese and his friend proceeded to Alwaye in Mathew's car along with Dr Thompson. Even while travelling, Varghese was asking umpteen questions, all about Ethiopia. In about ten minutes, their car left the borders of Cochin and entered Travancore. During those days, Alwaye was part of Travancore State. While nearing the Edappally Bridge, they witnessed a tragic incident and stopped their car. It was an accident on the road. A Travancore Military truck was

entering the bridge and was about to hit a bullock cart; attempting to avoid the bullock cart, the truck slipped across the road to skid off to a paddy field about twenty feet down the road. Many of the soldiers travelling in the truck lost their hold and fell outside in the field. Blood was oozing out of the head of one among them. A small crowd gathered around, but remained just onlookers not bothering to extend any assistance.

Dr Thompson was quite surprised at this and was deeply perturbed: "How come nobody is helping them? That man would die unless some first aid is provided." Mathew said, "No one is courageous to deal with Travancore Police or Military."

Sir C P Ramaswamy Iyer was the supreme authority with Travancore administration. Residents of Cochin were too scared of Travancore Police and therefore, those who gathered there stood mere spectators. Paul Varghese tried to convince Dr Thompson about the consequences awaiting them if they interfered and attempted to help the soldiers. However, Thompson was not inclined to retreat. Mathew told Paul Varghese in Malayalam, "We shall not have any business with Travancore Police. I am not there to go to court and depose as witness."

Now, Dr Thompson rushed to the field saying, "Let me see what I can do." Shouting, "Me too", Paul Varghese joined him. With help from some of those onlookers, Dr Thompson managed to have some cotton and water. He washed the wounds of the injured soldier and dressed properly. Varghese later came to know that Dr Thompson was an Orthopedic Surgeon. In the meantime, Mathew proceeded to Alwaye and brought an ambulance. All these took about just twenty minutes. These incidents caused an intimacy develop between Dr Thompson and Varghese.

They continued their journey. Dr Thompson told them that the purpose of his travelling to Alwaye was to catch a bus to Kottayam. He was going to visit the Anglican Bishop C K Jacob. He got down near the Alwaye Bus Station. Mathew moved to Alwaye town for his work and Dr Thompson sought the help of Paul Varghese to take his ticket. By the time Varghese took the ticket, time was 12:30.

Mathew came back soon. Varghese had to report for duty at the P&T office by 2:00 pm and he got into the car. Thompson bid farewell to Mathew and he came to Varghese, took his hands and told him, "I do appreciate your qualities." He gave his visiting card to Varghese. His address was "Dr R N Thompson, Regional Director of Education, Addis Ababa." When he said that his visit to India was on some diplomatic requirements, Varghese had thought that he would have been an official from their Department of Foreign Affairs. Understanding this confusion in Paul Varghese, he clarified, "I have come to recruit a few teachers to the Ethiopian Department of Education. The advertisement would appear in newspapers this week. In case, some your friends apply with your recommendation, I can certainly consider them."

Like a flash, many thoughts passed through the inner faculties of Varghese, including his promise to God that he would commence a renewed life, if a new opportunity to live were there. There is not much time to think over; these words spontaneously came out of his mouth. "I am not very sure about my friends; but, I am prepared to come to Ethiopia on a teaching assignment."

Varghese was under an impression that his job with P&T Department was one for his life. Leaving his native land to a far off place to build up a career was never there even in his wildest of imaginations. Then, how did these words come out of his tongue? He believed that prudential interference did it. The reason was that he was regularly praying for an opportunity to stay away from his friends to view life in a broad perspective without any preconceived notions. He was sure that God did answer his prayers.

A laughing Dr Thompson said, "Do not joke, dear friend. It is already 12:45. Be serious and move to Post office without getting late." Paul Varghese replied in all seriousness, "I am not joking. I am serious about what I had told you." Thompson asked him, "Come out of the car and prove it."

Varghese came out of the car and gestured Mathew to wait for him. Varghese and Dr Thompson moved to the ticket booking office of the Bus Stand to sit on a bench and discuss. Dr Thompson said,

"You speak beautiful English. Can you read and write as well?" He handed over a paper and asked Paul Varghese to note down his name and address on that.

Once he did this, Dr Thompson asked him to write a few sentences in English on that paper itself; Varghese felt a bit insulted and thought, he could have given a tougher test.

Thomson told him, "I will give you an application form. You fill it and send to my Madras address. We will call you for an interview. My colleague is now at Madras. I can't take a decision myself."

Varghese reached his office that day little late. However, he almost decided to move to Ethiopia, if selected. Dr Thompson had come to recruit teachers who were university graduates. Qualification of Varghese was just a pass in SSLC, but in first class.

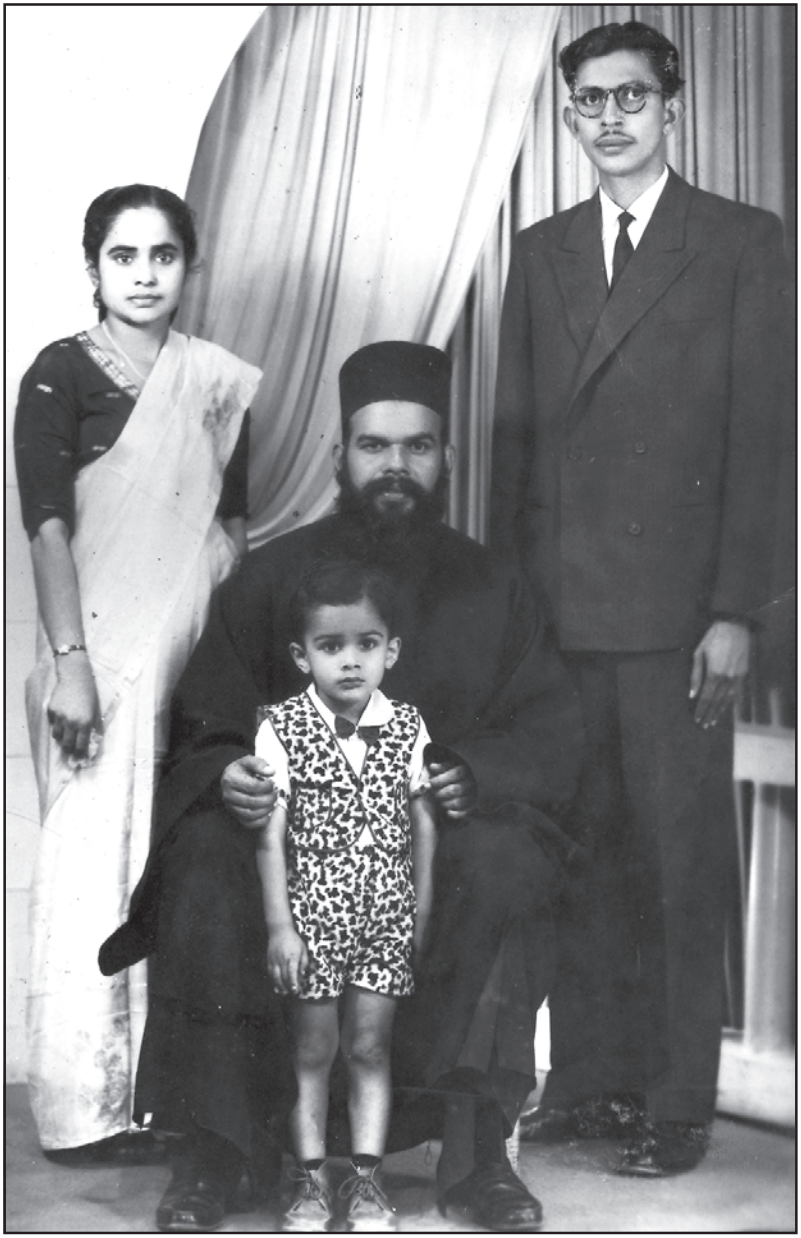
Dr Thompson had the feeling that Varghese, who spoke beautiful English would shine as a teacher in Ethiopia. Because of this, he too was a candidate for the interview as a special case despite not being a graduate. After a personal interview in Madras, Varghese and 28 others proceeded to Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia in two chartered flights on the cool morning of November 15, 1947. Concerning Varghese, this was not just a routine journey; the pilgrimage set off here.

Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios had enthused and enlightened the thinking processes of our world with his innate intellectual brilliance; for him, this Alwaye incident was the second turning point in his life.

* * * * * *

Human life is akin to a wild stream as a poet had meaningfully penned. From the enchanting heights of hilly forests, the stream flows down changing its course instantly as it proceeds. Many men and women look for new directions in life quite similarly. Travails searching for the meaning of life stop at four way junctions, but God leads forward the right way. At least some identify the true meaning of life here.

Had Varghese stuck to the path he had been proceeding hitherto, what he would have become in life? May be he would have grown



Fr. Paul Varghese with T. P. Paulose and Family

up as a Senior Post Master in HSG grade as well as a strong leader of P&T union at the national level.

However, he ended up elsewhere. With an unexpected incident confronting him, he got an opportunity to move to Ethiopia, though he could not hold on their permanently. He took up varying roles one after another, as days progressed. Ultimately, offering himself to God in its wholesomeness, he became a priest and later a Metropolitan.

Paulos Mar Gregorios had his birth as the third son of Thadickal T P Paily and Eli in Tripunithura town of Ernakulam District on August 9, 1922 (Karkkidakam 25, 1097, Chathayam star). His parents baptized him as Geevarghese and his name turned out as Varghese; in the school, he was T P Varghese. Family and close ones called him 'Varkipillai' affectionately. That was his pet name. Family members and close relatives used to mock at him calling 'coconut headed.' He had two elder brothers and two younger ones. Eldest one T P Paulose worked for Indian Navy and he passed away at an early age. Second one T P Cherian worked for a private company managed by a Christian group at Ernakulam and later moved to a Gulf country; he too passed away quite early. The one who is just younger to Varghese also worked for Indian Navy and was staying at their ancestral home after his retirement. After his death in the recent past, his son Biju Jacob occupied the house. He dismantled the old house and built up a new one. A shopping complex too has come up there. The youngest brother T P Abraham was at Canada with family on employment; he passed away at Canada. He had worked at Ethiopia also for a short while.

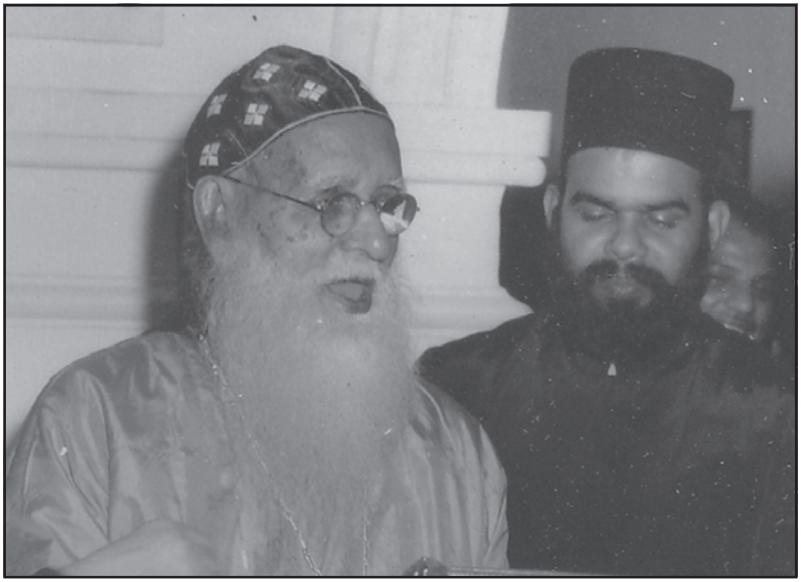
His father was the Head Master of a Lower Primary School who worked at Kadumakkudi near Njarakkal during his last days in service. A man of good reading, he had deep knowledge about Hinduism. He was thorough with Ramayana and Mahabharata. Further, he was well proficient in English language.

Late Mr M Thomman, Secretary of Fellowship House, Alwaye for long, was a student of Paily master at Mulanthuruthy. His wife late Ms Saramma Thomman used to recall the reminiscence of her husband, "Paily master used to teach very well. When I was studying

in third forum, he realized my interest in English language and advised me to read the volumes of Shakespeare. He was enthusiastic to nurture students in the right direction taking personal interest in them."

Metropolitan's younger brother T P Jacob recalls, "Our father maintained cordial and loving relationships with all his children. He was systematic in all his day-to-day affairs and was quite stringent in spending money. Nothing was to happen in our house without his knowledge. He used to scold or beat us very rarely."

During his younger days, the only one Metropolitan he remembered to have seen frequently was HH Baselios Geevarghese II Catholicose). The reason was that Manayidaveettil Kunjumpappy, a next-door neighbor of Paul Varghese had married the sister of Mar Gregoriose. When the Metropolitan paid a visit to see his sister's mother in law, who was on sick bed, many gathered there to kiss his hands. Since Manayida house was very close, Varghese too went there and kissed the hands of HG. He was aged five or six then. HG blessed young Varghese with his inherent joy and a smile enriched in



Fr. Paul Varghese with HH Geevarghese II Catholicos

sweetness and affection. That enchanting vision of a fascinating and all smiling personality of inexplicable greatness Varghese then had, excited the person in him. This incident cherished the childhood reminiscence of Paul Varghese for a long period.

Metropolitan recalls his childhood: "There are very few childhood memories that stand out. Not too many adventures or exploits to narrate. Life confined to very limited parameters. I cannot even remember the birth of my two younger brothers. Going to school, going to church, visiting some uncles and cousins living not more than six miles away - that was the extent of my experience. Sometimes my father would take me to some Hindu temple festival, late in the evening after supper, mainly to watch *Kathakali*, the traditional Kerala dance-narrative, done in open air at night, usually beginning at 9 pm and ending in the small hours of the morning. On the other hand, it may be to watch the fireworks connected with the temple festival. We never went to see movies, though silent movies had already come to Tripunithura, my home town."

"Not that life was idyllic or something approaching that. Our family was poor though 'respectable.' My paternal grandfather was somewhat wealthy, with house and land and fields and all that. It seems he squandered and frittered most of that wealth away. He must have taken cash loans from our neighboring family, pledging the land. In my childhood, I understood that most of our neighbor's land once belonged to Thadikkal Kunjipaily, my father's father. He died before I was born. All I have to go by are a teenager's memories of what my father and others said about him. It seems he was profligate and slightly on the licentious side. However, he was a leader in the community, all the same."

"My paternal grandmother too died before I was born, and I have no way of making any judgments. Neither did I know my maternal grandfather, Ponodath Cherian of Mulanthuruthy. I have a vague memory of my maternal grandmother on her deathbed, since mother took me with her as a child when she went to the funeral."

"In any case, unlike Sartre, I had no occasion that any grandparents spoiled me. They all left the scene well before, or soon after, I arrived.

I have often wondered whether a bit of spoiling by grandparents is not good for the growing child, a different and often more permissive, tolerant, affectionate relationship than one can have with one's parents or siblings. Such spoiling seems to help by providing a way out from tensions with one's parents, and supplying a more indulgent, playful senior, often with some wisdom gained from experience. In any case, my brothers and I were not fortunate that way."

"In truth, I did not even have paternal uncles or aunts. My father was an only child, brought up largely by his mother. That too is not so good when it comes to learning to deal with one's fellow human beings. My mother on the other hand was an only sister of four brothers, a little spoiled angel. She was an angel indeed, extremely intelligent, but with only a fourth grade education. That was not too bad for rural girls in nineteenth century India. She could read and write. One of her brothers was well educated by the standards of those days. He had graduated from high school, and became a revered teacher of all who went to school in the village of Mulanthuruthy. Respected by all as Ponodath Abraham Master, he was also my favorite uncle, learned and noble of character."

"My father had discontinued his education with the eighth grade. He never told us the reason, and we never asked. Perhaps his father was not alive. He was intelligent and could speak and write better English than many of today's university graduates of India can. He became an elementary school teacher, and was, by the standards of the day, fairly well read in both English and Malayalam literature. I remember that when I was away from home I corresponded with my father in English."

"I think my father was thirteen and my mother ten when they were married. That was the custom those days, and such arranged child marriages were common during those days. What was unusual was the kind of nuclear family in which they had to bring up their five sons. Every other family seemed to have at least one grandparent living. It must have been quite a strain on my parents. They were five boys, but no girls. I have heard that the first child was a girl, but the birth was premature and the infant died soon."

"I was the middle child, baptized as Geevarghese or George. Both names were versions of the Greek name Georges, meaning a farmer. In Kerala, the version is 'Varghese', which in turn is an abbreviation of the Syriac Geevarghese. I was as a child known as T P Varghese (Thadikkal Paily Varghese) and later as Paul Varghese until I formally became a monk in 1975. Then I, by my own choice, took the monastic name Paulose, partly to give some continuity with my former name, and partly to honor in one shot, the Apostle Paul, as well as my late father and eldest brother, both of whom had names Paulose in their Baptism and had passed away long before 1975."

"I seem to have been slightly on the precocious side, and went to school early, just past four. I remember my father, a teacher in the elementary grades in the local Boy's High School, taking me to the Head Master, for exemption from the age limit of five needed to be admitted to the first grade. The headmaster was some Iyengar (South Indian Brahmin), formidable and forbidding, in a black coat buttoned up to the neck, white turban on his head, mouthful of betel-leaf chew. I remember my father also was clad in dhoti, buttoned-up coat and white turban. The image is very vivid in my mind today, because it was quite intimidating to a four-year old. The Head Master thundered, it seemed to me: 'what do you intend to do, Paily Master? Bring him to school every day in your coat pocket?' Well, I got admission. I was glad to be out of the Head Master's office. I was scared."

"By the time I was in the fourth grade, my slight precociousness found some recognition in the school. My eldest brother's classmates, six years my senior, would bring their English textbooks to me, to hear me reading them aloud, often without understanding the meaning."

"Though I was among the best students in my class, some of my Hindu teachers would take delight in castigating me and making fun of me in class. That was the style those days. My Malayalam teacher, Mr. Shankara Menon was particularly offensive and often downright abusive. Sometimes he would say in class, 'How can you shrimp-eating Christians ever learn a literary language like Malayalam?' It was all coming out of a crude affection, not out of communal hatred, but it was hard to take for a sensitive boy who did not want to be

ashamed of his allegiance to the Christian faith. After all, a good third of our local community were Christians, and my family belonged to the ancient community of St Thomas Christians, pure Indians whose Indian ancestors had lived in Kerala as Christians for nearly as long as Christianity has existed in the world, tracing their origin to St Thomas, one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ."

"But being abused by teachers in class was part of the game of school education in that society, and one had to take it all in one's stride. I was small, compared to my classmates, and also slightly pale and anemic. Therefore, a nickname that stuck to me was yellow frog (*Manjathavala*) and I learned to live with. Another nickname was both complimentary and jeering at the same time with a tinge of playful envy, I presume: "Hammerhead" (*Kottodithalayan*). It referred to my small body and rather longish head. I find it difficult even today to buy a hat that fits my long head. I do not think that the size of my head has anything to do with its content, except that at times I do seem to have a swollen head."

"I went to a school where about a third were Christians, the others following Islam or different varieties of Sanatana Dharma. As a child I was not brainwashed by Western missionary thinking forcing me to regard and condemn non-Christians as unsaved. In fact our community developed its own myths of religious co-existence, not just tolerance for other religions that some advocate, but genuine fraternal friendship with people of other faiths. For example, in my childhood I had my Sunday School lessons in a nearby church, St. George's Orthodox Church, Karingachira. During the feast of St. George huge church processions (with the cross and white banner of the resurrection) were taken out through the streets of our town. The Vishnu Temple in my town also had similar processions with the image of Vishnu infront. There was always danger of communal clashes as the Hindu procession entered predominantly Christian areas or vice versa, since both communities were equally prone to the evils of triumphalism."

"So the myth our community developed, shocking perhaps to Western Christians, held that St. George and the Lord Vishnu were blood brothers. I may not have quite believed it as a child, but it helped create the right attitude towards my Hindu brothers and sisters.

Muslims were also regarded as brothers and sisters of Christians, sharing together the once honorific title of *Mapilas* or *Mahapillais*- or 'great scribes.' So I grew up as a child with fraternal feelings for people of other religions. I knew something about their practices, but little about their deeper faith and understanding."

Father of Varghese who was teaching in elementary classes of Tripunithura High School got promotion to take up the post of Head Master of a Primary School in a village far off from his house. He could not reach the new school taking a single bus from the Tripunithura and therefore, was not in a position to stay at home.

"Half a day's travelling was there for one to reach the place where my father was posted now. At some places, ferry had to be crossed and sometimes, the man who operates boat would not be there. The ferry used to be a bit dangerous too. In short, my father had to leave home very early on Mondays to come back late Friday night. He used to stay in some palm leaf thatched huts during these days. Ferries were too risky during rainy seasons. There were no means to communicate to us that he had reached school safely after leaving home on Mondays. This situation made our mother tense and we, the five sons too joined her tension."

"Our poverty was also a source of tension for the family. Most of the neighboring families regarded my parents as fortunate, and to some extent envied them. They had five sons, all fairly bright, all prospective earners, and no daughters. In that society, sons were assets and daughters were liabilities. Sons, besides earning money for the families, would bring in a dowry. Daughters, on the other hand, even if they earned money, would benefit only the husband's family, and they would have to be married off with a decent dowry and would thus diminish the family wealth, which was always held collectively. Human worth was measured of course in economic categories even in those days."

"But looking after the needs of a family of seven on my father's peak salary of Rs. 28.00 (about U S $ 6.00) per month in the 1930's was quite a strain, even without having to worry about marrying off any daughters. The only extra income for our family was a little rice

we could harvest twice a year from our half-acre rice paddy, plus a few coconuts every month. As the boys grew up, and the eldest was already in college, the strain became fairly intolerable. We knew what it meant not to have enough to eat, not to afford new clothes, not to splash on hospitality as our neighbors did."

In the meantime, father managed to buy a small building nearby. His plan was to give this on rent so that their financial liquidity can improve. He rented out the building at a monthly rent of Rs 2.50. However, the tenant, from Devadasi community, was a semi criminal. Not only that he defaulted in payment of rent, he also harassed and quarreled with his wife and children causing disturbances to the peaceful living of the family of Varghese; he turned out to be a permanent nuisance.

"He abused us and our mother alleging that we were hooligans. We did not find any ways to evacuate him; he bluntly refused to vacate. This caused to multiply the tension our family was passing through. The situation was worse during the time our father was away. There might be other reasons too for the tension within us; may be something our parents kept away from us. Among all these issues, our mother was a model to others worth emulating through her philanthropic mind earnestly willing to extend help to others in need. I remember very specifically that she was ready to help anyone who needed something. She was extremely compassionate and kind hearted to beggars, those neighbors who were sick, travelers, destitute and such sufferers. The market was very close to our house, just a few yards away. She was very soft towards those poor farmers who carried heavy loads of vegetables, hays and straws to the market to find buyers. After disposing of their produce at the market, they used to enter our house to cook rice for their meal and my mother helped them with her kindness."

"One memory is particularly fresh in my mind, of an unlettered Christian peasant by the name Ethapanos (Stephen). He was in his fifties. With the few rupees he had received by selling his bale of hay, which he had carried on his head five miles from home, he had bought a new earthenware pot and had boiled a cupful of rice in it, with

firewood and hearth lent by mother. When the rice-brew was cooked, in our backyard, before waiting for it to cool down, with the aid of a coconut-shell ladle loaned by mother, he was furiously ladling down the stemming hot brew. Obviously he was frantically hungry. I watched, as a little boy. I was surprised to find that he was consuming the rice straight, without any curry, side-dish or relish. At a suitable interval in the course of his furious gulping, I put him the question. "Brother Ethapanos, how can you eat that rice without any side-dish?" His reply I still remember. "There is enough Kanhi (rice-brew) here to fill my tummy. Why should I need any side-dish? Besides, I was very hungry." His bale of hay had probably brought him two rupees or less, and out of it he had spent quarter of a rupee on that earthenware pot, which he wanted to take home to his wife, and less than one-eighth of a rupee on the rice. The rest of the two rupees was what his family had to live on for many days. That was the plight of the poor in those days: hardworking, abstemious, dignified even when indigent. I admired my mother for helping them without damaging their dignity, despite her own tensions and troubles."

Deacon Petros, MA, BD, LT, a second cousin of father, was one of the childhood heroes of Varghese. He later became a bishop in the Malankara Orthodox Church, as Mookencheril Pathrose Mar Osthathiose. He was a social reformer standing shoulder to shoulder with Dr B R Ambedkar, Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II, Sree Narayana Guru, Sahodaran Ayyappan and Ayyankali. While he was working with Madanappalli High School, the government of Cochin decided to implement certain reformations towards the development of downtrodden segments in the society. The activities promoted by Mahatma Gandhi among Harijans (1925) had not commenced then. Years before allowing them to enter temples, Harijans could not even use the public streets for moving about. It was during

such a scenario, the Cochin Royal family took an initiative indicating their care for citizens beyond caste or creed or religion. The Divan of Cochin then was Sir T Vijayaraghavachari; though a Brahmin, he had absolutely no reservations to stand with the Royal family to implement such innovative schemes. To work out the modalities of this scheme, the government of Cochin chose Deacon Petros as the Special Officer. The Director of Education recommended the appointment of Deacon Petros to Divan sidelining some of the prevailing procedural formalities in the Department of Education. The Divan called Deacon Petros from Madanappalli through a telegram and handed over the appointment order. To assist Deacon Petros, the government appointed Deputy Inspector of Education Mr Viswanath Iyer and Mr Palliyil Krishna Menon. Deacon Petros coordinated and implemented multiphase innovations to improve the conditions of the backward communities some of which were revolutionary in nature. During those days (1925), nowhere in India, any government thought over such innovative schemes in the social scenario. Deacon Petros took these initiatives much before even Mahatma Gandhi made his initiatives in this segment; and this throws light on what was his position and standing as a social reformer. As the Special Officer, Deacon Petros organized a large gathering of the backward communities on May 15, 1919 (Edavam 1, 1094) at the Tripunithura Boys High School ground, which was presided over by Divan Sir T Vijayaraghavachari. Sahodaran Ayyappan and Deacon Petros spoke on the occasion attended by thousands of people belonging to backward communities. It was in this grand gathering, the Divan read out the Royal proclamation of the King of Cochin that backward castes can travel freely across all the public roads of the Cochin State. Vaikom Satyagraha was an event that has found its place in golden letters in Indian History; Deacon Petros was in the forefront of this Satyagraha along with K P Keshava Menon, A K Gopalan and Kelappan. The English magazine Swaraj published in detail the exciting speech delivered by him during the occasion. Varghese could associate himself with this great social reformer right from his very young years. Metropolitan Gregorios recalls that Fr Petros had induced traces of sparks in him.

"He was a prominent social worker of those days, working among the so-called Untouchables of Cochin and Travancore. He was a great speaker, always itinerant, self-sacrificing, and lived a very simple life, identifying himself with the living standards of the poor people among whom he worked."

"One day when he visited his ancestral home which was very near to ours, I went to see him as a little lad. The first person I met as I entered the house was his eldest brother, Mr. M. P. Varkey, a well - known rationalist-atheist. He was also on a short visit to his ancestral home. "Whom have you come to see, youngster?'' he asked me. "If you want to see God, he is in the next room; if you want to see the devil, he is right here." I was slightly embarrassed by the question, because he was my uncle and in his sixties. I could not start an argument with him. So I meekly replied that I had come to see Pathrose Semmasen, and moved to the next room."

"Deacon Petros received me with affection, and gave me the advice that I should live simply and serve the poor. He also told me that my paternal grandfather had been his Godfather. Obviously his grandmother was my great grandfather's sister or something like that. Anyway it was an inspiring meeting. He must have transmitted some spark to me."

When Paul Varghese was ten years old, there was an event in his life almost seeing death face to face. This incident was reason good enough for the birth of a 'philosopher', which the Metropolitan recalls:

"Here is a vignette from memory. I must have been ten. The open drains on both sides of the road in front of our house had flooded, and little finger-sized fish, escaped from the river, darted about in the drains. The harvest from our paddy-field had come in, and Pulaya (one of the sub-castes once called Untouchables, but not untouchable for us Christians, even those days when Hindus practiced untouchability) women, who were tenants of our farmland, were threshing the grain on the house veranda."

"I was under strict orders from my parents not to step into the flooded drains. When they were otherwise preoccupied, I stepped out and started trying to catch the little fish with my bare hands, a

rather frustrating experience. My neighbour boy across the street, aged nine, was watching my activity with interest, himself forbidden by his parents to step into the water. "There is a big fish right there. I saw it", he told me, pointing to a spot in the drain. I saw the fish or what I thought was the fish, and put out both hands to catch it. I not only missed the "fish" but on taking my hands out of the water, found that my middle finger was bleeding profusely. I had no idea what had happened. I quietly tried to cover my wound with a finger of the other hand, and tried to slink back into the security of the home. One of the threshing women, who happened to be very fond of me as a child, spotted my bleeding hand, and cried out to mother: "Something has happened to the little master." Mother came running and attended to the wound. My eldest brother went out of the house looking for the "biting fish", and to my surprise and awe, with the aid of a long big knife, began examining some of the cracks and crevices in the open gutter. Out came a big water snake, a full three feet or more long. I suddenly realized what had happened. The snake was drawn by my brother to dry ground. I was surprised that it did not run away or try to attack his attackers. I had the impression that he was saying sorry for having bitten me. He was lying quietly on the ground. Of course my big brother, with the help of others, killed that snake then and there. I was watching, with some sense of regret and confused sorrow, not only at my own plight, but feeling sorry also for the poor snake."

"Neighbors began to gather, as the news spread that Varikipilla as I was affectionately known, had been bitten by a snake. I was promptly taken to the snake poison expert, Valappil Varghese Chettan, who lived not too far down the same street. I was carefully examined and the verdict was given by the expert. "It is a poisonous snake that has bitten him, and the two fang-marks are there on his right middle-finger, for everyone to see. But for some strange reason, the snake has bitten without emptying his poison sacs, as if biting a frog or something for food." The *Vishavaidyan* or poison-doctor told my parents that there was no danger of death, but gave us some unguents and medicines to apply to the wound."

"We went home, and by that time all sorts of uncles and elders

from the community had gathered there and were sitting in a circle, in the center of which I sat on the floor, being administered unguents. Some of the elders, with singular inappropriateness, kept on haranguing and castigating me: "What kind of a big catch were you after? a salmon or a cod? You got what you deserved" and so on. It was painful. I was trying to sort out what had happened, how I was in danger of death, what could have happened if I had died, how my parents would have been sorry if I died. On the one hand I still felt sorry for that snake, which in fact had been rather kind to me, in not ejecting his venom into me, but had unfortunately been killed. On the other hand, I was trying to escape any blame for all that happened, by thinking that my neighbour boy (Baby was his name) was responsible for the whole thing, for he had pointed out the "fish" to me."

"The important thing probably was that I as a very young lad had faced the possibility of death, which I did with some measure of equanimity, confused, but not scared. As a youngster I realized how close death always was, to all of us."

Mar Gregorios believes that the orderly religious life in childhood was the crucial factor that was the first influence in his life towards his personality formulation. Parents of Varghese were regular in attending services of Church promptly, particularly his mother. It was a strict rule within the family that all the children had to attend services at the Church on all Sundays and Feast days. There used to be family prayer at home evening and morning. They used to observe regularly all those Lents prescribed by the Church. This was the routine in all Malankara Orthodox Church families during those days. The Metropolitan recalls that whatever attitudes and tastes he had acquired in his life from childhood to adulthood was from these systematic observations of prayers, rituals and the like at home.

Nadamel St Mary's Church at the heart of Tripunithura town was the parent parish of Varghese, which was just half a mile away from home. This parish had Sunday School facility up to class 4 only. Varghese had gone to Sunday School classes during childhood as his mother prompted him. A copy of the first Malayalam version of Holy

Nadamel Church

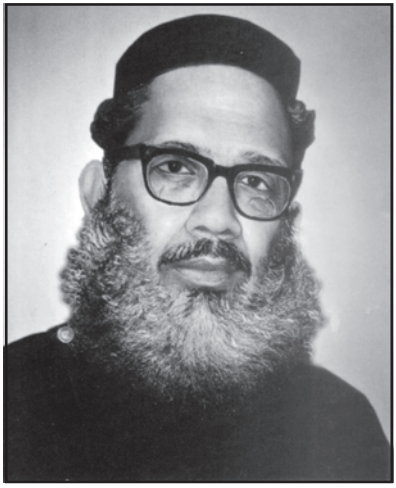
Karingachira Church

Bible, translated by Kayamkulam Philipose Ramban and Pulikkottil Ittoop Malpan in 1811 was available at home and mother gave it to Varghese. He preserved it as a valuable treasure until the end of his life. While he was aged nine, he passed class 4 of Sunday School. Karingachira St George Church about two miles far had Sunday School facility up to class 7. Varghese joined there in class 5. His parent parish requested him to take classes there and he agreed. So continuing as a student at the St George Church Sunday School, he was a teacher at St Mary's Church Sunday School. This was possible as the Sunday School timings were different at the two Churches. Varghese used to take part in Holy Qurbana at St George Church and attend Sunday School there; immediately after this, he would rush home, have lunch and then go to St Mary's Church to teach there. He was earning fame as an eleven-year-old Sunday School teacher.

"This system was very useful. Teaching stands out as good means to learn, particularly when this transcribes under symbolized subconscious perceptions. I benefitted a lot from Sunday School. I am very grateful for this experience. At St. George's, one of the teachers I remember very well was Punnachalil Chacko Master, learned and inspiring. There I deepened my commitment to God and to Jesus Christ. As an eleven year old teacher, I myself became popular; I think I managed to transmit some of my faith to a few of my own students, who were only a few years younger than their Boy Teacher."

"Preaching or sermons as such in church were neither altogether inspiring nor particularly edifying. The preachers were too unlettered and often downright boring. But listening to the reading of the Scriptures in church must have made an impact. By the time I was twelve, I had a personal knowledge of God and a sort of commitment to Christ. In fact I was on talking (prattling?) terms with God, with Jesus Christ, whom I acknowledged as my living Lord and Master as also the true manifestation of God."

Varghese had a liking towards spiritual life from his younger days and Fr P K Sleeba Cor Episcopa, the parish vicar was the indirect



inspiration behind this; the Holy Qurbana celebrated by this priest used to be very heart touching and smoothening to ears with a sermon that enlightened the believers to sustain themselves in true faith. These were great influences on the inner faculties of young Varghese. Thus, he developed a sort of adoration towards this priest. Varghese pondered over how to serve Church and community as an ideal priest like Fr Sleeba; a desire blossomed in his mind to turn to a priestly life, which he cherished ever since then not disclosing to or sharing with anyone.

"I had a few dramatic achievements to my credit; nothing whatever in sports or arts. The prizes were largely in elocution and essay competitions. One of these elocutions as a ninth-grader was pure showmanship on my part. I had managed to memorize a particularly bombastic passage from an Indian humor magazine and delivered it as my oration. Of course everybody knew I could not have written it myself. Neither did I claim that. In fact I did not know the meaning of half the words I pronounced. But it was rather smoothly delivered. It must have been the comic incongruity between my own size and the size of my words and sentences that fascinated my judges and hearers. I still remember parts of it, and with your kind permission, let me recall some of it here. It went somewhat as follows:

In promulgating your esoteric cogitations, or articulating your superficial sentimentalities and amicable philosophical or psychological observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity. Let your extemporaneous descantings and unpremeditated expatiations have intelligibility and veracious vivacity, without rodomontade or parsmical bombast. Sedulously avoid all polysyllabic profundity, pompous prolixity, psittaceous vacuity, ostentatious vapidity and ventriloquy verbosity. Let your conversational communications possess a clarified

conciseness, a compact comprehensibility, a coalescent consistency and a concatenated cogency. Eschew all conglomerations of flatulent garrulity, jejune babblement and asinine affectations.

It went on like that for a while and concluded with this smart peroration:

In other words, talk plainly, briefly, sensibly and naturally. Say what you mean; mean what you say; and do not use big words.

It seemed to go over well, better than I had expected. I even got the prize. My head became a little more swollen."

Vadayadiyil V V Varghese was a close friend of Paul Varghese during school days. He recalls an adventurous initiative of Paul Varghese those days. "Varghese's house was close to mine just on the north side. He was very good at studies, but completed his High School undergoing many sufferings. While we were in High School, we grew curious to witness the fireworks at Ernakulam. We went together and our journey back and forth was on foot. While returning, he was found very tired; on the way, we relieved ourselves with palm-sugar coffee and a fried dish made of boiled tapioca. During the school days, Varghese was interested in petty agricultural activities like nurturing banana plants and other seedlings. He also used to spend his time by playing with children of contemporary age in the neighborhood."

Dr A K Damodaran, the well-known Diplomat, was a student at Tripunithura Boys High School during the days Paul Varghese was also there. He reminisces, "There is nothing out of the ordinary that the small boy whom I came across at Tripunithura Boys High School in early 1930s to have grown up as a senior leader of Indian Orthodox Church as also having transformed to an efficient social activist respected by thousands of social workers across the globe. This transformation was the impact of continuous and incessant search under trying circumstances to achieve uniqueness. It deserves highest appreciation, as this was individual brilliance. I am sure no one can copy it."

A friend of Varghese, Manayida Thomas says that he was extra

ordinary brilliant as a student. Thomas used to call his classmate Varghese as Appu. Another classmate Vendarappally V M Varkey recalls, “In Tripunithura Govt. Boys School where the children from Royal family were also studying, children showing this much brilliance in English and all were extremely rare.”

“He always topped in English elocutions at school. Even while in class VI, he used to reproduce lengthy verses from great writers like Johnson” as Elamana Hari, who was with Varghese from class IV to School Final says. Though separated after SSLC, they used to meet occasionally at Tripunithura Mahatma Library.

Despite travelling the world across and passing of years, the Metropolitan never forgot his classmates and other friends of young days. During his last days, there was a get together of old friends at Alwaye. Hari recalls that occasion, “When he came to Alwaye on treatment, I went there to offer my respects. Then, he enquired about our old friends. He specifically enquired about Kochaniyan who was Chairman of Kalamandalam and T E Bhaskaran and others.”

His brother Jacob says about the younger days of the Metropolitan, “His main activities then were reading and studies. Mathematics was his favorite subject. He was interested in playing with other children and used to engage in some physical exercises also. He was very affectionate to mother and she also used to express her love profoundly. Mother used to gather all the children and make them pray every day very promptly; father also used to pray, might not as much as our mother did. Mother was very particular to observe fasting and Lents apart from her regular prayers. Brother had a very amicable relationship with our parish church; our mother’s inspiration would have catalyzed this. Father was mostly engaged in matters outside the house whereas all domestic affairs were looked after by mother.”

During those days, non-violent struggle for India’s independence was very active. The Metropolitan recalls, “During those days, we were rather small children; yet, we used to sing songs and used to get enthusiastic. We were walking around singing such songs.”

As a boy, Varghese had no opportunity to have seen anything beyond his house, school and church. He was shy, but intelligent and

God fearing. He was not much aware of his own virtues. He obeyed his parents and teachers without questioning. He never hurt or caused pain to anyone or anything. He believed in non-violence and held it as his doctrine. He trained himself to suffer and forgive.

He had great admiration for two leaders during school days. One of them was Pastor Martin Nee Mueller of Germany who fought against Hitler courageously and had to be in gallows; the other was Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia who valiantly fought Mussolini but lost his country and lived a noble life holding on to his progressive ideas to return to power later. Varghese had the unique opportunity to acquaint with these two leaders later in his life.

"During my teens, I had developed extra admiration for two heroic world figures. What was common to them was their determined resistance to insolent might. Signor Benito Mussolini and Herr Adolf Hitler personified that Fascist might they both resisted. The two heroic resistors were Emperor Haile Sellassie of Ethiopia and Pastor Martin Niemoeller of Germany. In fact I wrote feature articles about both the resistors during the days of my teen-age journalism. By a strange coincidence, I came to know both of them rather intimately and personally in later life."

"Winston Churchill also resisted Hitler, but he was no hero for me. For me as a youngster, the British Prime Minister represented great pluck and courage, but more bluff and rhetoric, and not much concern for justice or equity. After all, Churchill did declare that he had not become Prime Minister of England to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire over which the sun never set. I was one among millions who sincerely and passionately desired the liquidation of that empire, so that my people could be free from the imperial yoke."

Paul Varghese's father was a personality who used to contain within himself his affection for others; but mother was different in as much as that she was showering her love profusely on her children while nurturing them. Affection was flowing from his mother like milk from her breast that formulated Varghese as a treasure box of love despite being strong hearted.[2]

His mother laid the foundation of faith in Paul Varghese. "On

many occasions, I have been pondering over as who has laid in me the foundation of my faith. It was not the priest in my church. It was not any of the Metropolitans. My mother taught me basics of faith. My faith came from there. Theology teaches us that Metropolitans pass on faith to succeeding Metropolitans. However, as far as I am concerned, I do not think that a Metropolitan passed on faith to me. My mother did it. I believe, my apostolic succession comes to me from my mother."

His mother turned sick, a sort of incurable one, when he was thirteen. Her sickness was something that pained Paul Varghese unceasingly during his childhood. The Metropolitan recalls the incidents of those days retained in his heart as fresh as ever:

"The scene is not quite clear in my mind. It must have been 1935, and I should then be 13. My mother was in bed with a high fever. Suddenly she got up with a great surge of energy, went out of the house, opened the gate, and was talking away quite loudly to the passers by. What she was saying made no sense. I watched in consternation. I could not grasp what had happened. Only after people had forcibly brought her inside the house, did it dawn on me that my most beloved mother had gone out of her mind. She had become mentally ill, manic-depressive, schizophrenic, insane."

"I shall spare myself the pain of describing all my mother's actions in detail. Nor do I want to dwell on the incapacity of my father and the five sons to cope with the situation. All kinds of quacks and physicians (mainly Ayurvedic) were consulted, but to no avail. In her manic phase, she was virtually impossible to control, and was often violent. Quite frequently she would disappear from the house, wander over long distances, and after several days, would return home, distraught and worn out. We never found out how she managed for food on these long wanderings. We supposed that she visited her brothers and other relatives because stories were carried to us from them. Sometimes when she came back, her clothes would be so dirty, giving us the impression that she had slept on the road. Father sometimes beat her up, while we sons watched helplessly or pleaded or struggled to stop him."

"All of us five sons loved her deeply, and this was hard for all of us to take. Home life was completely disrupted. We had no domestic servants, and quite often we boys did some minimal cooking, or went without food altogether. My father, a man noted for his integrity and independence, suddenly went sour and sullen, sulky and petulant. Joy had gone from the home and gloom had descended."

May be his personal feelings continuously haunting him, he noted later in one of his stories, "My mother is insane! The one who gave me birth and nurtured me is schizophrenic. My all and all in this world is mentally imbalanced! Why should I be not like that? No, I have my youth in me. I want to live. Why should I not commit suicide? No, that is cowardice. … Why I should not escape from here? No, well-experienced doctors are treating my mother; she would be fine soon. My heart turned calm with fulfillment of hope. That evening, I heard Thykkattu Moosathu telling my father, "You may take her to someone else." What does this mean? Her illness is incurable! Normal sense will not return to my mother. My mother is insane! She is a schizophrenic that wandering children would throw stones on her if she moves out. No, never, that cannot be my mother. I would not see such a scene. My mother has gone to another world that is more tranquil."[3]

"There were two things that irked me no end: one was the violence, and the other the social opprobrium. Father was cruel when he lost his temper at mother's tantrums. He would beat her up, with the bare hand or with a stick. Mother just took the beatings in her stride, only becoming more and more abusive. And we sons, who loved them both, had to watch this, with mounting pain and frustration. One saw no way out of the suffering. Even today, when I think of it, shudders run up and down my body."

"The social opprobrium was even worse for a sensitive teenager. Some days, especially if father were not at home, mother would go and stand on the road side verandah to the south of our house, and would stand there, doing all kinds of pranks and talking all kinds of nonsense particularly when the road on the south of our house was full of children going to school. They were my classmates and

schoolmates, and I was filled with shame that they watched my mother in this condition."

"One memory is particularly poignant. I was preparing for my secondary school public examinations in 1937. Mother had been ill for some two years now. She was in a particularly violent phase, the family decided to empty the kitchen and lock her up in the kitchen room. Mother was protesting loudly, and asking us to open the door and let her out. I felt sorry for mother, but had to stay in solidarity with the family decision. I was weeping profusely. The public examinations had started, and I had to do my preparations sitting on the door still of the kitchen where my mother had been locked up. I was weeping all the while, just getting up in time to be at the examination hall before the exam started. Often I had no breakfast, for there was no one to prepare it. We often starved, for no one was in a mood to cook."

The eldest brother of Varghese took his BA Degree from Madras University and to escape from all those uneasiness in family, joined British Indian Navy as a Petty Officer. Cherian, his second brother completed type writing and stenography after his High School and joined a small firm at Ernakulam called 'Christian Company.' He was paid Rs 10/- per month. This firm was located in a building of St Mary's Church, Ernakulam and he stayed there itself having his food from a nearby hotel. Now, Varghese and his two school going younger brothers were at home. The responsibility to look after his younger brothers fell on him. One can only imagine their pathetic situation with nobody to comfort or console them. What they could do then was to weep in silence.

'Neither in scriptures nor in theology, had Varghese any answer to the reasons behind the illness of his mother. Later, he understood that just like evil, the pains associated with illness were stones of fire to sanctify human spirit; they were not there in the beginning, they will not be there at the end as well. Sufferings lead the spirit aligning with God from holiness to holiness.'[4]

Varghese passed SSLC with First Class from Tripunithura Government High School in 1937 and had sixth rank in the State of

Cochin. Moreover, he was the one who top scored from his school. He scored 96 marks in Mathematics to win State Gold Medal.

He earned this distinction by writing the examination with a swollen face with tears trickling down and having not eaten anything as breakfast, which enhances the shine of his achievement. During these days, mother's illness had some minor relief. His excellent performance at the SSLC examination instilled a spark of enthusiasm that he had a burning desire to go for further studies. Due to the illness of his wife, father had turned out almost a pessimist. He was not prepared to do anything for his son. He withdrew from all responsibilities regarding his son's future.

An extraordinarily brilliant student passed SSLC examination with top class marks, but his father, himself a schoolteacher, had chosen not to send him for college education. His justification was that he was not having financial capacity for sending his son to college. He said, "My son does not need college education." He advised his son to earn his livelihood seeking a job somewhere.

Varghese applied for the scholarship awarded to brilliant students at state level for higher education. He was eligible for Rs 4.50 every month. This amount was sufficient to pay fees for any college under the University of Madras. The college nearest to his house was Maharajas College, Ernakulam which itself was six miles far; therefore, travelling and lunch expenses would account for another five rupees a month which his father bluntly refused to arrange. Even his close relations including maternal uncles were not inclined to help.

However, the teachers of Tripunithura Boys High School came forward to bear the expenses for the college education of Paul Varghese. His father did not allow even this offer. He said, "If my son has the fate to study further, he will; I do not have the capacity to educate him further. He need not study at the cost of others. God has blessed him with the ability to study; he will study by himself." Because of this stand taken by his father, Varghese had to forgo his desire for college education.

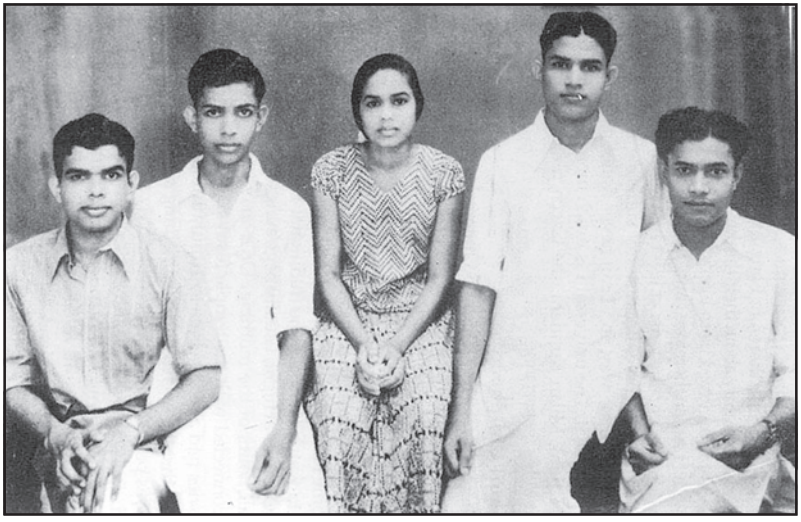
His brother, just elder to Varghese, had only High School education; father thought, for the next one also the same education would suffice.

During those days, to join a Govt. School as teacher or to join Govt. service as a clerk, High School education was all that was necessary. His father held a view that it would have better for his sons to be independent as early as possible. There is no doubt that they had financial difficulties. His two younger sons were studying in schools. A monthly salary of Rs 28/- earned by him was the main income for the family. Yet, the adamancy that Varghese should not pursue college education was a bit too much as the family was not that poor not capable to manage these. There is a genuine doubt that their father's nature had undergone a change, not for the better, because of the illness of his wife. This is quite a possible reason behind all these.

Mr Cherian, the elder brother of Varghese was working at Ernakulam and Varghese presented all his worries before him. However, he was not financially well off to support the educational expenses of Varghese.

Varghese wrote a letter to his brother at Ernakulam to make enquiries whether he was eligible for the State Scholarship. He started impatiently waiting day after day for a reply from Ernakulam and spent good time at the door of the local Post Office. He returned home disappointed every day hoping to have the reply card next day. At last, the reply came one day; Varghese had no chance as he fell short by just two marks. He lost the opportunity for Scholarship. He saw the graveyard of all his dreams. Retaining a faint hope, he started patiently waiting for that day when his brother assumed a good position and sent him to College.

The Metropolitan recalls this incident: "In 1937, I secured admission at Ernakulam Maharajas College as a student. Since I was a rank holder in the State of Cochin, I would have got a scholarship of Rs 4.50 a month. However, I was residing at Tripunithura and bus fare for a month for commuting to Ernakulam would come to about Rs 3/- plus a month. There was no source for me to make this shortage good as nobody came forward with a helping hand. As such, I did not join the college. It was my great desire to join Maharajas College; yet, I could not, as truly, there was none in my locality or family to help me with Rs 3/- a month for my studies then."[5]



With Brothers and a Cousin Sister

It is noteworthy that Varghese had to confront the first opposition in his life from none other than his own father. This was a sharp setback to mind during his adolescence. However, this would have prompted him later to analyze and perceive the essence of relationship between God, the Father and men, the sons in the backdrop of Eastern Theology. Varghese respected his father, even adored him. Never in his life did he hate him or disobey him. Nevertheless, he believed that as the father is independent, the son, subject to the supreme authority of father, is also independent. Therefore, the solution here is to stand independently on one's own legs. Mother birds teach their infants to fly; they do not carry them on their beaks and fly. Varghese respected the determination, purity of character and his authoritative stands. Gradually, he could emulate these qualities in his life as well.[6]

Mother's illness turned to worse these days. Varghese thought of eloping as an escape route from all these tribulations. He had limitations. Two younger brothers were there to be part of the sufferings. He did not want to leave them alone and escape. Varghese

found solace in prayers. The only way out for him was to leave home to a distant location. He spent his days starving. His starvation was, perhaps, too much that no body of his age or circumstances had undergone. He had many sleepless nights. He wept and wept; tears were flowing from his eyes incessantly. In his attempt to run away from these situations at home, he fell into new friendships, some good and some bad.

Varghese had neither good food nor decent dresses. He never wished them either. Nevertheless, he thirsted for love. Fatherly love, motherly love and sisterly love stood denied. As such, he cherished to love and be loved. There were many in the surroundings who loved Varghese for his virtues and good character. However, he was not longing that sort of a love.

The personality of Varghese was so peculiar that an ordinary man could not comprehend it. He was a too complex type of a youth who sought recognition and wanted others to know him. He worked hard for recognition.

Gradually, to relieve himself from the family scenario, Varghese concentrated in reading. Thus, he developed and empathy towards the marginalized. He read about the atrocities committed by Mussolini and Hitler; he had his faculties strengthened enough to stand with the exploited lot. Anger against the two was sharp in his mind. Varghese even thought of joining the Army to confront the two. He developed a sort of liking towards those who were fighting against Mussolini and Hitler.[7]

Objection from his father was the first turning point in the life of Varghese. He was just about fourteen years of age. During those days, it was not difficult for one with a first class in SSLC to get a reasonably good job. However, Varghese was helpless as he was not mature in age. As days were passing, he spent his time reading and turned to writing as well. He sent articles to newspapers and they published a few. 'Gomathy' was a known newspaper published from Cochin and its Tripunithura area correspondent one Mr Kuriakose took attention of Varghese. He made Varghese to prepare news reports as also to write articles. All such writings appeared in the

newspaper, but the author's name used to be Kuriakose and not Varghese. Even some other senior journalists used Varghese to write and his acquaintance with Mr Kuriakose made him known in the field as a journalist to a certain extent.

Varghese, as a journalist and as an intelligent, well-behaved young man closely associated himself with many people and learnt many things from them. He learnt not from what they spoke, but by shrewdly observing their activities and their behavior. Side by side with journalism, he developed interest in politics and engaged in such activities. He noted that many around him had their own selfish agenda and they were tactful. Many of them showed affection on Varghese seeing his personal sorrows, but such exhibitions of love were not at all sincere. They did not realize that such insincere show from their part only added up to his already existing miseries.

Whatever be the task he ventured, Varghese did much more than a young man of his age normally did. He was a believer, but not too zealous or one beyond normal limits. He believed in Jesus Christ and in his incomparable mercy. Every time he did something wrong to his conviction, he repented and prayed to Jesus for pardon. Whenever he was all alone, he prayed seeking a way that he could go away from home to engage himself in productive means.

As things were moving on like this, he had an occasion to get in touch with 'Malabar Mail', another prominent newspaper published from Cochin. One Jacob Kithoo of Udayamperoor was working with 'Malabar Mail' who took personal interest that Varghese got an opportunity to work with them. He used to go to the office of Malabar Mail and assist them in editorial works. Moreover, he started reporting pieces of news from the Royal palace as well as incidents of news value from elsewhere. He did not have any remuneration worth mentioning, but he reinvented journalism as an interesting experience in life rather than just a vocation. Journalism paved him a way for learning many things in different percepts.

Had you entered the field of journalism intending to become a writer?

"I never had any desire to become a writer. However, when ideas developed in me, I thought of sharing them with others. Like that, I became a writer."

Did you choose journalism to work against social injustice?

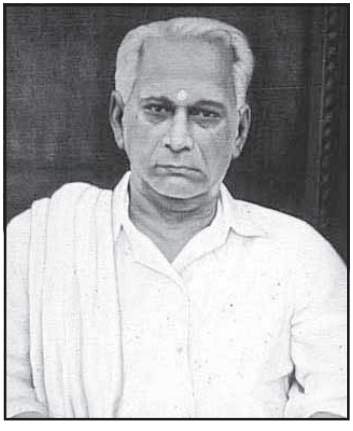
"No. Before one turns 18 years of age, nobody will entrust any work to anyone. When you choose to be a freelancer, age criterion is not significant. You write something; if found good enough, they will publish it; that is all. I enjoyed writing. Because of that and as also I did not get any other job, I took to journalism. Since I had not turned 18 years, I could not do anything worthwhile for a few years."

Do you recall your first article published?

"No. In 'Gomathy', no articles appeared in my name; whatever I worked appeared as the reports of Kuriakose. Most of my articles and reports appeared in 'Malabar Mail' only."

What type of topics you used to handle those days?

"Internal politics within the states of Cochin and Travancore, politics related to Kerala, national politics, international issues, coverage of meetings of political activists within Cochin - Travancore states were all subjects I used to handle. The main international issue then was the alignment of Hitler and Mussolini. This was the time before they separated. Therefore, I used to write about those. Mostly, I had my concentration on striking pieces of news. I have not written much about religious subjects. Based on certain ideas that I gather from some of the foreign magazines, I had written articles. Even, I used to write articles for other magazines. I wrote a couple of articles in English, which appeared in 'Illustrated Weekly of India', published from Bombay."



Who all encouraged you while you were active in journalism?

"Puthezhathu Raman Menon was

one who valued me much. He was an advisor to the King of Cochin apart from being a highly respected writer. He had written many letters to me, which I have kept safe like a treasure. Those letters acknowledged my inquisitiveness and capabilities. He used to encourage me a lot. He was the one who provided me valuable information of news value within and about the Royal Palace. In fact, he was the only one who had encouraged me through letters. Later, even after I had moved to Ethiopia, he used to keep writing that our relationship continued. There were others also who had appreciated me, but orally. One Ittoop, a Sub Editor with Malabar Mail used to encourage my works profusely."

Was Malabar Mail, the main newspaper in Cochin then?

"There were only three newspapers then in Cochin namely Deepam, Malabar Mail and Gomathy. Malabar Mail had wider circulation. Mostly, the Roman Catholics used to read Malabar Mail. The size of this paper was comparatively larger than the other two and therefore, news coverage used to be more. It enjoyed a prime position as a general newspaper in Malabar."

'Malayala Manorama' used to reproduce some of the reports of Paul Varghese considering the news value thereof, acknowledging, 'from Malabar Mail.' Varghese had once published a sensational report titled '*Penpillai Simham*', which Manorama reproduced and because of this, he had to enter the Police Station.

"My dramatic style of reporting once drew me into an imbroglio. It was a fairly sensational capture of a notorious con man called Vayalaran Shouri. Shouri was handsome, good looking, well dressed when necessary, and imposing in stature. He had many striking stories to his credit, especially in dodging the police. Once they found out that he was living by himself in a tiny islet in our Cochin backwaters, in a little hut that he had put up for himself. He was the sole resident of that islet, not more than 50 feet in diameter."

A posse of Cochin Police, five or six in number, got into a crude canoe and landed on his island one fine morning. They encircled the small hut, and shouted to Shouri, who was inside the hut but could not been seen: "Shouri, you are caught. Be good enough to come out and

get arrested." "Oh my masters!" responded Shouri from inside the hut. "Give me a minute. I am just having my morning Kanhi (rice-brew). I did not have a thing to eat yesterday. Let me just finish my breakfast, and I will come out."

"Take your time, Shourie," the Police Officer shouted back into the hut. "But, don't try any of your tricks. You haven't got a chance. You are completely surrounded."

"Okay, it won't be a minute," Shourie said from inside, in a plaintive tone.

Shourie did come out, in about a minute. But his defiance surprised the Police and took them aback, for they were getting ready for a meek surrender on the part of Shourie, and on their part a gentle operation of handcuffing him quietly. As Shourie came out of the hut, furious looking and menacing with a nine-inch blade sharp dagger in his hand. "I will chop off your heads like this", said Shourie, chopping off a good one-inch segment of his own left middle finger.

The little piece of blood-dripping flesh flying off Shourie's knife into the backwaters dazed and bewildered the policemen. In that half-minute when the police stood aghast, Shourie jumped into the waters and began swimming and diving at top speed. The policemen in their neat uniforms did not want to jump into the water, and so went and got into their little canoe, and began rowing furiously in the direction that Shourie seemed to have taken. Unexpectedly, Shourie came up from under the water behind them and overthrew the boat. The policemen, none of them great swimmers, were frantically trying to stay afloat and save their own lives, while Shourie quietly escaped.

The story was common knowledge in the Cochin area because the participating policemen themselves had narrated it to their friends. The press had published only a short account of Shourie's escape, since they did not want to humiliate the police by telling the story of their ineptitude and incompetence. Shourie had become a legendary figure for the public.

"So when Shourie was finally captured, and that too by a woman, it was top news. I got the story mostly from my Press colleagues and

other friends. If it were today, I would have had to do much more investigation before reporting it as I did in the *Malabar Mail*. The prestigious and high-circulation daily *Malayala Manorama* picked it up from the Malabar Mail and splashed it on the front page with a double-column caption: *Penpillai Simham*. An equivalent in English would be something like *A Lioness Springs*."

"The story I told, within the limits of my present memory, can be summarized as follows: A rubber grower in our neighboring hill country in the state of Travancore had gone to Kottayam to sell his latex rubber, and was returning home, rather late in the day, with the money in his briefcase. As he was walking home, a considerable distance from the bus stop, an imposing and well-dressed pedestrian fell in with him and started walking in the same direction. They started a conversation and the rubber planter was soon charmed and impressed. Nearing his home, he asked the stranger his name and where he was from. And Shourie (that was who the stranger was) gave a convincing name and locality of origin. Shourie explained that he was on his way to visit a friend in a neighboring town, but had got delayed visiting all kinds of friends en route. He had missed the last bus to the town where he was going. The planter invited the stranger to stay at his home and resume his journey in the morning. Shourie accepted after the customary and polite initial "I don't want to bother you."

So they got to the planter's rather sumptuous home, and after a bath, was having supper. At that moment a messenger came with the information that a close relative had died. The planter was expected to go back with the messenger to the house of mourning. He fixed a bed for his guest on the outer verandah of his house, and leaving his wife more or less alone in the house with some housemaids, had to go on his way to the house of mourning, promising to return as early the next day as he could.

Shourie went to bed on the verandah, and the doors of the house were closed from inside. In the small hours of the morning, he got up and made quite a noise to the effect that he had been bitten by a snake. As the unsuspecting lady of the house opened the doors to see what had happened, Shourie jumped inside the house, and wielding

his frightening dagger, told the lady, "Bring me the key to the cellar door where the money is kept, or I will kill you." The lady quietly went into her bedroom, followed by Shourie, and came out with the key to open the cellar or strong room of the house. Quietly, without saying a word, she unlocked the cellar door and let Shourie go in. As soon as Shourie had entered, she locked the door and made him prisoner. Shourie kept shouting, but she quietly went out of the house at that unseemly hour to call for help. A Pulaya (once called Untouchable) who lived in a hut in their compound and was loyal to the family, agreed to overpower Shourie provided the Planter's family would undertake responsibility if something happened to the Pulaya. Meanwhile others had gathered to help the Pulaya, and the police had been sent for. There were no telephones those days. By the time the police arrived, the cellar had been unlocked; Shourie had been overpowered and bound with ropes.

"So much for the story as I had reported it, based on fairly reliable testimony. It was sensational news for our region, for everyone had heard about Shourie and his exploits. I was not smart enough to wonder why other reporters did not pick up the story on their own. I had not reported the details of the earlier raid by the Police of my own state of Cochin and their failure. I had simply reported the story of the capture, not by Police, but by an ordinary poor peasant and a smart Christian woman. This capture had taken place in my neighboring state ruled by the Maharajah of Travancore, where the Police was notoriously corrupt. Travancore was ruled de facto by the Prime Minister or "Dewan" of the state, the scholarly Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, who was bent on destroying the economic and political power of the Christian Community which formed 40% of the population of that state. To that end he had used some of the methods that Hitler was using against the Jews in Germany. The police was his main instrument."

"After reporting the incident of Shourie's capture I should have followed it up. I did not, mostly because I did not have the resources to do the investigating job. It was too dangerous for a teenage reporter to meddle with the Travancore police. If I had investigated, I would have found out that the Police had made him produce all his previous

stolen goods, sharing the booty among themselves (there was a lot of gold jewels, I heard) and let him go free without any record of his capture."

"I found out soon that I was in trouble. First it was a Criminal Intelligence Department inspector from Travancore who came to question me about the source of my information. He must have been amused by my boyish looks, and was rather kind in his questioning. I asked him about the source of his information that I was the reporter. When he told me that it was the editorial staff of my paper, I told him they had no business to tell him, but did not deny that I was the reporter. First he asked me for a written statement that I had no basis for my report. When I refused that, he told me I did not have to give him anything in writing, but merely tell him the source of my information in Travancore state, so that he could get a denial from that person. I told him that that was not journalistic ethics."

"Up to that point he was polite and so was I. We were sitting in a friend's store and talking very privately. The inspector now changed his tone and asked me whether I understood that the Travancore government could take legal action against me. I told him that I was a citizen of Cochin state, and owed nothing to the Travancore state. He asked me, ''How old are you?'' He suspected that I was not old enough to be prosecuted as an adult. I did not tell him that I was only sixteen. Instead, I asked, with a smile on my lips, but rather rudely, ''What! Do you want to negotiate a marriage arrangement for me?" In our society of arranged marriages, middle men did the negotiating. He said simply, "You will hear again from the Police on this matter." That concluded our conversation."

"I did hear again, soon after. This time it was a big burly Police Officer from Travancore, Anayadi (elephant-footed) Padmanabhan Pillai, a notorious Assistant Superintendent of Police. He came through official channels. It was our local Police Sub Inspector of Tripunithura, N. R. Subrahmania Iyer, who sent a constable to my home to call me to the local Police Station. I promptly went. I had never been to a police station before. Though a bit anxious, I was determined within myself not to be intimidated."

"Anayadi was sitting with our SI in the latter's office. "My goodness! So young! You must be the same age as my grandson. Just answer my questions, and there won't be any trouble." That was his greeting. "Who gave you this information about the capture of Shourie? We have absolutely no record of any such arrest. We do not even know where Shourie is now. Just give me the name of your informant, and I shall save you from trouble." He was friendly and very paternal."

"I am sorry Sir," I replied, "I cannot give you that information." He coaxed me in his grandfatherly way, and told me that he was giving me wise advice and that I should not hold back the information from the Police. I persisted in my refusal, and our local Sub-Inspector, who knew me well as a journalist, joined in; "Give him the information; that is best for you." As I continued to refuse, the SI said to me, "Do you know that I can arrest you and pack you off to Travancore?"

"Cochin was a much less corrupt Princely State than Travancore. Our police could of course beat me up, but that was a risk I was prepared to take, trusting in God. So I answered, fairly boldly but not without fear: "Mr. N. R. Subrahmania Iyer, the laws of our state do not give you the power to do so. There is no case against me, and you cannot arrest me." The two police officers looked at each other for a moment. It was Iyer who said to me, "You may go, Mr. Verghese."

The episode ended this way. Varghese did not hear from the Police again. Nevertheless, for a short period, he had a little fear in mind that something might happen. However, nothing was there. Whatever be that, this incident was remained an unforgettable one in the journalistic life of Varghese.

Later, there was an incident where the same Shouri hoodwinked the Police of Cochin and escaped from them. Varghese got specific information of this incident too, but did not venture to report, as the earlier incident was live in his mind.

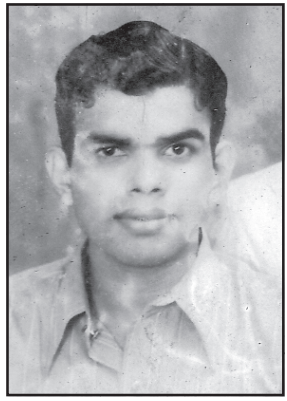
There was another unforgettable episode in his journalistic life related to his reporting of the one to one dialogue between Sir C P

Ramaswamy Iyer, the Divan of Travancore and Shanmugham Chetty, the Divan of Cochin.

"It was in 1939, if I recall correct, a one to one interaction took place at Munnar between Sir C P Ramaswamy Iyer and Shanmugham Chetty, Divans of Travancore and Cochin. I was the one who reported this for 'Malabar Mail.' More or less at the same time, there was another one to one dialogue in Austria between Hitler and Mussolini. In my report, I attempted a comparison between these two meetings. 'Malabar Mail' published my report as full-page story. The purpose behind this meeting was to discuss and arrive at consensus on various issues and differences between the Governments of Travancore and Cochin so that both States can move forward on friendly terms. I had been to Munnar to report this, met both of them and talked. During those days, Ernakulam was the centre of activities of Travancore State Congress. To provide leadership to their activities, T M Varghese and such leaders were staying at Ernakulam. Cochin Government used to be friendly and accommodative to these people. The main issue Sir C P Ramaswamy Iyer raised was that the Government of Cochin was supporting those who were fighting against him. Shanmugham Chetty successfully pacified Sir C P offering some reasons or excuses defending its stand. Thus both the governments succeeded in reaching a friendly conclusion."

His father maintained a passive attitude towards the activities of his son in the field of journalism. He would have been content that his son was learning to stand on his own legs, as there was no scope for him to attend a college for higher education. Further, there was no chance for him to earn an employment, as he was under-aged for that. Therefore, there was no chance for the father to find fault with his son.

"What I gained in journalism was just to have a canvas to think and learn about the world as a well as to interact with many men of differing natures. I was a correspondent and freelance journalist for 'Malabar Mail', but did not have any financial benefits. I could stay home and do the work; apart from that, it was not at all a means for livelihood for me."



Have you had an occasion to read the Malayalam writings of those days?

"I could read Malayalam to a very limited extend. Most of what I read was in English. I could not explore into Malayalam much, poetry or prose. Nevertheless, I have read here and there. However, my journalistic life gave me opportunity to come across many writers in Malayalam. I could personally interact and maintain healthy relationships with Vaikom Muhammad Basheer and Changampuzha and a few others. We had good acquaintance mutually as we used to come across at many meetings. Sitting together, we had talked a lot. I had shared my thinking with Basheer at Vaikom and at Ernakulam. I had also read many of the writings of Basheer and Changampuzha. Nevertheless, as my interest was more to read in English, I could not venture much in Malayalam. After a period, I have not read Malayalam much."

"I had a taste for Russian literature. My father used to read books of Tolstoy. In fact, he inculcated in me the interest to read books in English and Malayalam. I found it interesting to read the writings of Basheer and Changampuzha, but the thoughts in them were not much influential on me. But the writings of Tagore had touched me deeply."

"In 1937 and 38, India's Freedom Movement was just gaining momentum. Generally speaking, Christians were not very enthusiastic about it. The majority among them thought that British imperial rule would be preferable to self-rule. After all, the Colonial Masters were also Christians! I was not persuaded about this point of view. Especially in the princely states of Cochin and Travancore, we were ruled by Maharajahs and not directly by the British. We saw very few Britishers. They were not part of our social life."

"Our own Maharajahs of Cochin, usually in their eighties, were very benign and God-fearing. The throne was given always to the eldest male member of a royal family of some 600 members. So he was usually eighty by the time he inherited the throne, and did not live

very long after that. Our own home was on Hill Palace Road, leading to the Maharajah's Palace, about a mile away. We saw him passing in front of our house very often, without ostentation or fanfare, except on festival days. As school children, we would go to the palace once a year, and we would be treated to sweets. Younger members of the royal family were my classmates, though they were forbidden to mingle with us socially. Some of the Maharajahs were great scholars, especially in Sanskrit, while others were quite simple-minded and the butt of many jokes."

"One of the jokes went like this. As a man of eighty he was the Chief Guest at a Football (Soccer) Match. That was his first exposure to the game. After watching 22 people fighting for the ball, he asked his minister: "Why all this scrambling and scuffling for one ball? Why don't you give them two dozen balls, so that each can have one?"

"With such darling dodos ruling us, we did not feel the weight of British imperial rule. There was oppression and exploitation in society, many inequalities and injustices, but I was not very much worked up about these in those days."

"Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were great leaders for us, but we saw so little of them. I have heard Nehru once in my youth, and he impressed me with what he said and how he said it. Gandhi once came to our hometown and I was impressed with his simplicity and that toothless smile of his. But one of our people did him a dirty trick. Gandhi was in the habit of auctioning off everything that was given to him, and giving the proceeds to some charitable fund. In my hometown, he was auctioning off the gilt framed address of welcome presented to him. The one who bid highest was one Krishnankutty, who was a shady character. I think his bid was over Rs. 40, a considerable sum in those days. Only later I discovered that he was a dealer in forged currency notes, that he had offered Gandhi a forged hundred-rupee note and got a good 60 Rupees in change as well as the framed address!"

"The local or state politics was more interesting to me as a teenager. I began to understand the need for removing untouchability, for which Gandhi also campaigned. I saw the need for removing social and

economic inequalities as time went on. The political meetings I covered as a reporter helped the process of my conscientisation."

"One day I was covering a large public meeting addressed by Sahodaran Ayyappan, one of our great social reformers from the backward Eazhava community. I was impressed by his demands for social reform, and during discussion time, I asked him the question, rather unexpected from the press Gallery where I sat: "Why is it that you leaders do not let someone like me, who is only 16, join the political party?" His answer was picturesque and still rings in my ears: "We do not believe in plucking out the seedlings (of rice) from the field and throwing it to the cattle." So I knew where I stood. I was only a seedling."

"But I did become politically active, whenever they would let me. I took part in the election campaign for the Congress candidate from my constituency for the Cochin Legislative Council. My reporting was also often politically significant. But overall, my political sensitivities were hardly developed until much later."

When he was seventeen years old, he was elected Honorary Secretary of the Mahatma Public Library and Reading Room, which began in 1933 in the town of Tripunithura. This was a recognition conferred to youngsters by elders of the community. The response from Varghese was characteristic of him, as this choice was a credit to him for what he was then. He worked hard to manage the affairs of the library in the best possible way. He had spent good time in the library reading most of the books covering a good part of his readings in life. He organized weekly discussions on social reformation and innovative art & literature. He worked as the Secretary of the Library for three years (1939 - 42).

"After leaving school, I read voraciously. First it was all detective fiction. When I could get hold of books, I read also serious English literature. One such book was R. L. Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. I was moved and fascinated by the book. It was about a scholar-scientist who was a split personality, a good man (Dr. Jekyll) who could occasionally and without warning turn into a monster (Mr. Hyde) and go out and do all sorts of wicked things like a sort of Frankenstein."

"The book must have spoken subconsciously to a trait in my own character. There was quite a bit of goodness in me, but I knew that a lot of sheer wickedness was lurking underneath all the time. Ambition could not always be distinguished from love of domination and power, from the desire for adulation and flattery. Yearning for love and affection often took the form of seeking glory and honour. I became addicted to praise and admiration, which was often forthcoming for a juvenile writer. I loved to see my name in print, in signed articles I wrote as a youngster. It delighted me to see my own reporting published in the newspaper and I often showed it to my friends. I loved to be praised, but I was afraid to be loved, mainly for fear that I could not take it when the love would be withdrawn. I was once the object of great love and affection from my mother, but its apparent withdrawal as a result of her illness was a trauma that I never got over. My personality was unmistakably dual and unintegrated. Whether as a form of catharsis or not, I decided to translate *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* into Malayalam. I produced a hundred page manuscript, but did not seek a publisher. I kept it with me for a long time, with my published texts. One fine day, after having been absent from home for years on jobs outside, I discovered that my father had disposed it all off as waste paper. I was stricken with grief."

During his days a journalist, he had an occasion to meet the known atheist M C Joseph. They met at Mookencheril House, related to the family of Varghese and their dialogues lasted a whole night. Eighteen-year-old Varghese left that house early morning with the words of blessings from M C Joseph, "you are to become great."

Paul Varghese was in the field of journalism for four years. He used to write articles in the names Paul Varghese and T P Varghese. In 1941, he took part in a competitive examination. This was a preliminary test for recruiting clerks to the Post & Telegraph Department. There were nearly 300 candidates for selection to some 12 vacancies. About 80% of the candidates who appeared in this test were graduates. Among them, Varghese was just a High School pass.

On his way back home, he paid a visit to one his friends at Cochin. This friend was also waiting to meet Varghese. He told Varghese

about a job he had arranged with someone. The employment was with a company owned by one John Meenchirappadan. This person had a tobacco business then at Tripunithura. As he was staying at Tripunithura, he knew Varghese and his family. He offered a job to Varghese, as he was quite aware of the plight of that family. Varghese accepted the offer. The office was at Mattancherry, some 12 km away from home.

Varghese was looking forward to a chance to escape from the pathetic conditions of his home; but when he got this opportunity, his father and younger brothers stood out in him as a question mark. Probably he would have thought like the heroin of a short story he wrote later. "I want to live. For sure, I will not live in this hell. Then what do I do about my father? Oh! Father is a real problem. Youth fought against fatherly affection; ultimately, that ended victorious; I decided to leave my home."

The company where Varghese joined, Cochin Transport Company, had just two more employees other than him. His salary was Rs 18/- per month and the nature of job gave him full satisfaction. He stayed at the office and had his food from a nearby hotel. Rs 6/- was sufficient for food for a month and he used the balance for buying newspapers and other petty expenses. Varghese was very happy and relieved at his transformation from zero income to Rs 18/- a month.

Though he was happy, he felt a bit worried seeing those who earned more. He was upset that his talents were going astray.

The business John Meenchirappadan was carrying on was something no one did in South India. He was importing rice from Burma and selling it. The rice he imported did not move to any storage; instead, the wholesale dealers took them to their storage facilities in boats. This company had seven branches. Whatever rice remained after transferring to dealers, moved to branches through boats. When the ship returned, many indigenous goods filled the vessel for export. The job profile from Varghese comes like this: arrange delivery of the imported goods to merchants after properly measuring them, arrange boats through the in charge of boats for reaching various

goods to the ship for export, ensure correct quantification of goods for each ship. He was also looking after the accounts of various establishments owned by Meenchirappadan. His sons gradually turned good friends of Varghese. He had to travel frequently to different shops owned by Meenchirappadan and sometimes, to his residence at Piravam. Varghese earned good experience in administrative matters during his tenure with John Meenchirappadan.

Paul Meenchirappadan, one of the sons of John said this, "Paul Varghese was a very nice and amicable person; he did not possess any bad traits. He was quite straight forward as a person. Even his family was like that."

"Two or three simple memories stand out from those days. Everybody in the office belonged to the same Syrian Christian community, and life was fairly congenial. But there were two of my neighbors who did not. One was a youngster, Balakrishna pillai, a Hindu, a couple of years senior to me. He worked (and lived) in the offices next to ours, in the same building. His philosophy of life was that youth was there to be enjoyed. He was so enthusiastic about it that he could not understand my home-bred reluctance to seek forbidden pleasures like wine and women, both easily accessible in the city. It was half courtesy and half curiosity that let me go out with him one night into some of the more lurid quarters of that city. That was enough. It left some painful memories, which have kept me from that kind of pleasure-seeking ever after."

The Man Who lived for Money

"The other neighbor, who also lived and worked next door to us in the same building, was a *Satta* trader, one who bought and sold shares by telephone. I was told he was very rich, but he lived and worked in one room, with a chair, a narrow bed, a telephone, and a large safe in which he kept his documents and money. I never got to know him, because he was always at his telephone, morning till night. He could think and talk only about stocks and shares and about money. He seemed to have no family, no social life, no friends. He lived for money."

"One morning we were in for a surprise. We were told that he

had died during the night. It was a heart attack. He had gotten up from his bed, gone to his safe, and had collapsed with his hand still on the handle of the safe. The scene made a deep impression on me. We talked about it a lot in the office, but alone, I pondered about the meaning of the event. I suppose these small events do shape one's outlook on life. Perhaps not through conscious cogitations and rational conclusions, but through insights of an impressionable age, lingering long, hidden in the sub-conscious."

Appearing for a Competitive Examination

Varghese worked for about two years with Cochin Transport Company. Though he had attempted the test for recruitment to Post & Telegraph Department, he had no hope that he would succeed. Even he wrote the examination in an easygoing manner. The subjects covered in the test were Mathematics, Geography, General Knowledge and English.

One question was to write a note on Seven Pagodas. In his life until then, he had neither heard about these nor read about them. Yet, he wrote an answer like this. "The Seven pagodas could hardly be in America, in Europe or in Australia. Nor do they sound African. So they must be in Asia." Similarly, there was another question, to write a brief note about Atlantic Charter. It was just about a few months earlier, Roosevelt and Churchill signed this. With a bit of arrogance, he wrote, "The Atlantic Charter deserves to be submerged where it arose, i.e., in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean."

It was tough to get a selection to Post & Telegraph Department those days. The reason for this was that the British Government used to be very particular to recruit the best talents available in all the fields. This type of competitive examinations was for selecting the best among the eligible candidates. Officials serving under the government had good pay packets then. The monthly salary of a clerical cadre employee was just Rs 15/- per month with the States of Travancore and Cochin whereas British Government used to pay Rs 35/- for their clerical cadre. Apart from this pay, there was a provision for Rs 4/- as Good Conduct Pay. This Good Conduct pay was a strategic move to motivate government employees to stay

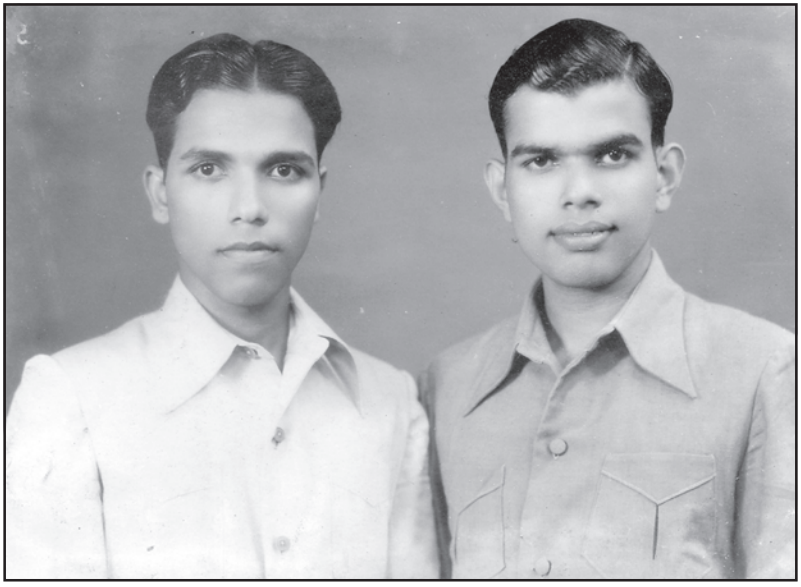
away from any agitations against the administration including their joining the struggle for independence.

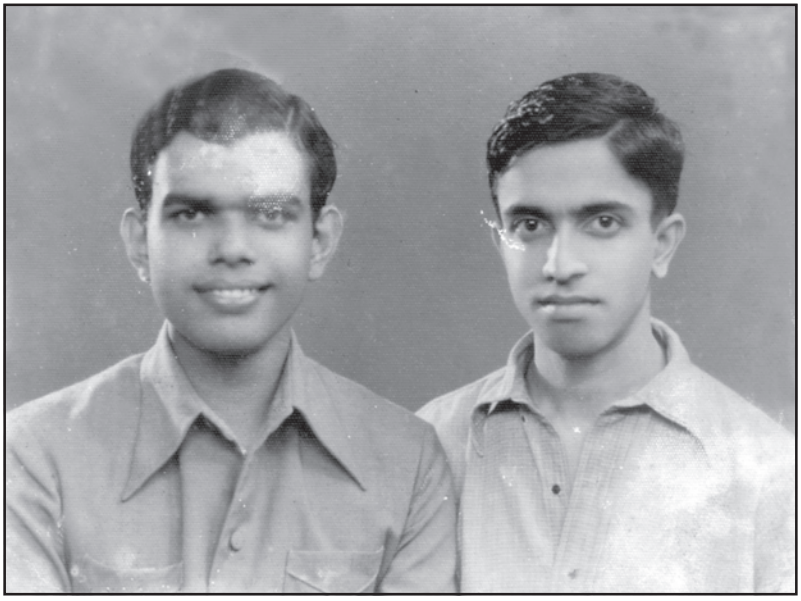
Whatever be that, despite his traces of arrogance in answering certain questions, Varghese was successful in that competitive examination. He received the relevant intimation from the Post Master General of Madras Circle sometime in January 1942. However, there was no confirmation of his appointment in that intimation. Therefore, Varghese did not take it very seriously. He had it as just something in its usual course. Even he thought that he would have just managed to get through that examination. However, by February end, he received a second intimation that he could report to any Post Office of his choice and join duties. Indeed, this had an element of surprise for Varghese. Yet, there were some other issues; to join the Department of Post & Telegraph, it was necessary to provide a security Deposit of Rs 200/-. He had no means to find out Rs 200/- for this; he knew his father had money and therefore, he sought father's assistance, but to no avail.

The viewpoint of his father had another dimension. He advised Varghese that it would be a blunder to join Post & Telegraph department because the British would leave India shortly.

Varghese wrote a letter to his elder brother explaining the entire scenario pleading to help him by providing the money needed for making the security deposit. His brother sent Rs 75/- to their father and give Rs 200/- to Varghese adding the balance from his side. Not only that his father did not do as his elder son suggested, but he was adamant not to give that Rs 75/- also. He found out many lame excuses for this. However, Varghese pleaded as much as he could, even falling at his father's feet and breaking down. Ultimately, he gave Varghese Rs 75/- warning him strictly not to approach again with any such requests for money.

To find the balance needed, Varghese visited many of his relatives at their houses, but nobody was prepared to help him. He was thoroughly dejected. He was sitting in his office with no enthusiasm. His employer Meenchirappadan noticed something wrong with Varghese and he sought to know the reasons. Varghese explained





the entire episode. Varghese did not want to borrow money from his employer for this purpose because he knew that Meenchirappadan was reluctant to lose Varghese. Varghese thought that he was a hard-minded man and a cutthroat businessperson. However, he enquired, "How much more you need to reach Rs 200/-?" Varghese reluctantly or nervously mentioned, "Rs 120/-." Immediately, he wrote cheque for that amount and handed over to Varghese. Thus, Varghese joined Post & Telegraph Department at the mercy of his current employer.

The Metropolitan had wrote like this about his feelings at that time: *"Any other heart but one that had been used to worse tribulation, would have either broken down on the spot, or resorted to reckless revenge. My heart never seems to have broken. It withstood this gross insult flung upon a son by a parent, with considerable calmness.*

In those days everybody thought a postal job, a very covetable one. Even now people persist in that mio-belief. So I had to find out somehow or other. But whom, whom in all the world of uncles and aunts, was I to approach? I never thought of approaching my own uncles. I couldn't bring myself as much down as all that. I had heard that another of my distant uncles atTrichur had advanced some money to my brother as a loan in times of need, and though I would also approach him for a loan. But the unanswerable question. "Your father has enough money in the Bank, then why do you come to us?" never struck me at first. It was a question that I couldn't answer without serious injury to my self-respect. So I chose not to answer it. I was humiliated. He directed me to another uncle of mine, at Irinjalakuda. The same unanswerable question was repeated there. I felt I had lost everything. My just elder brother wrote another letter asking his old employer at Ernakulam to lend me the required amount, but he also promptly regretted his inability. In the meanwhile, my fool company in Cochin had indeed me to fall into my first and perhaps last indulgence in a youthful indiscretion and I was still suffering from the after effects of the same.

All my energies, mental and physical were enhausted. If I had a little less of self-respect (I have it one bit too much) I could

have asked any of my uncles and most probably succeeded. But I kept quiet, and prayed to my Lord Jesus. The voice of my agony would have touched my Lord. He who had saved me out of every tight corner could not fail me this time. I had prayed for a long-time that I should pass in the competitive examination, and for a long time I thought my prayer had gone unheeded. This time too it was heeded to, and in a most wonderful way too. I was just sitting in a sullen and gloomy mood, because I was suffering in mind and body and I couldn't hide my sufferings. My employer, himself a strict man of business took pity on me, and asked me just how much money I wanted. I had never asked him for help. I had known that he was too much of a businessman, and also I knew that he did not want me to leave his company. So his question naturally took me by surprise. I mentioned the amount Rs. 120/ and promptly he gave me a cheque for the amount.O! I did'nt know how to thank him or thank my Lord."[8]

The first posting of Varghese was at the Head Post Office located on Shanmugham Road, Ernakulam. He was a clerk there. For a twenty-year-old man with only SSLC as his qualification, this job was quite a satisfying one. Once he started earning, the responsibility to take care his younger brothers fell on Varghese; he had to look after their studies as also their other expenses. A monthly salary of Rs 35/- was sufficient then for a family to live comfortably. Varghese decided to take a house on rent at Ernakulam and keep a servant to look after the household chores. He took a small house near the spot where the office of Malayala Manorama was located earlier and started to stay there. Due to mother's illness, the situation at home was pathetic. Therefore, Varghese took the wife of his eldest brother, the one employed with Indian Navy at Bombay, to stay with him along with his youngest brother, Abraham. By this time, the other brother, the one just below him, had completed school education and joined Indian navy. Varghese made Abraham to peruse his higher studies at Sacred Heart College, Thevara. Though he lost the opportunity to go for University education, Varghese saw to it that his brother did not meet a similar fate.

After a stint at the Head Post Office, Ernakulam, Varghese had

to undergo training in Morse Telegraphic Signaling at Madras. The Training Institute was located at Kodambakkam. He put himself up at a nearby lodge with other trainees. Here, Varghese had his first opportunity to mingle with young men speaking other languages such as Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. All of them became his good friends.

Apart from undergoing training in telegraphy, Varghese used this opportunity to learn something else also, out of personal interest. With the help of his new friends, he learnt to read and write Tamil. Since Tamil and Malayalam were sister languages in the Dravidian family, this learning process was not difficult.

Some of the living styles of Tamilians seemed interesting to Varghese. He adjusted to their eating habits easily. His not sticking to any peculiar likes and dislikes in food habits at home enabled this adaptation a comfortable change. It was a pleasant surprise for him that milkmen came to houses with cows and milked their cows in front us direct to our own utensils. This gave him an opportunity to drink milk with its natural warmth. Madras was a city far bigger than Cochin. Apart from paying visits to certain places of attraction in the company of his friends, he did not venture into any other exciting program.

The Quit India Movement started in 1942 when Varghese was in Madras. His patriotism energized him to join the movement. He took part in slogan shouting and similar actions of protest along with University students. They shouted on the roads, “John Bull, John Bull, Quit India; Inquilab Zindabad.” Varghese joined students to pull down the emergency alarm chains in local trains to disrupt normal commutation. Though he himself did not do it, his joining that gang was as good as being a part of that. Albeit having a satisfaction, the move was not without risk because he was one among the ‘most obedient servants’ of British Government.

The response of Varghese towards the political phenomenology of 1940s was of a mutual contradiction. Mahatma Gandhi had qualified Subash Chandra Bose as ‘Patriot among Patriots.’ Varghese took his stand that Bose deserved that qualification. He considered Bose as a leader who was courageous, committed and realistic. His strong

antipathy towards British supremacy was enough for Varghese to respect him.

"He passed the coveted ICS examination at Cambridge. However, expressing his disrespect towards the system of imperialism, he tore away the certificate publicly. This action from Bose enlightened my spirits. Nevertheless, I could not appreciate two of his stands, one, his seeking assistance from Germany for Indian freedom struggle and two, his foolishness to attack India knowing for sure that it was a strategic blunder. Bose was a strong person. Had he shown a little different diplomacy, he could have made an independent India of another look."

"On the other hand, Mahatma Gandhi was a spiritually much more attractive figure, truly Indian and truly universal, the best specimen of humanity our world has produced in the last couple of centuries. Bose, like Nehru, was a Cambridge trained Western Liberal, only more radical in his revolutionary methods. Gandhi embodied uncompromising integrity with genuine love and compassion for all. He was closer to the poor and suffering masses of India, identified with them in utter simplicity, deeply religious, and politically astute all the same."

"The other Indian I admired was Rabindranath Tagore. His *Gitanjali*, *Post Office*, *Fruit-gathering* and other poems touched my heart deeply. Tagore had a feeling for the mystery of life; he was no Western Liberal; he was a poet of the Unseen, a bard of true Beauty and a hierophant of the Holy. My post office colleague and friend Varghese Mathew, whom we affectionately called *Chinthan* (Thinker), not only frequently read Tagore to me, but even recited long Tagore passages from memory. Tagore, though ardent in this own way for India's freedom, kept some distance from both Gandhi and Nehru, and did not occupy the center of India's freedom struggle. I have often thought that Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru together constituted the triptych icon of independent India as it emerged in 1947."

Telegraph Office and Post Office were located together those days. After his training at Madras, Varghese worked at Ernakulam

Head Post Office itself as a 'Combined Hand.' After his training, Varghese was skilled in sending messages through Morse system and identifying the contents of messages coming through it. The one who did this work along with the postal work was a 'Combined Hand.'

During these days, Varghese noted down some of the thoughts formulated in his heart, on a notebook titled, 'From the Heart.' These beautiful thoughts ended up with a prayer to the Almighty. He prayed that all his deeds be useful to others and his life be a blessing to this world.

> "How wonderful a creation is humankind – too great in ideology – fascinatingly attractive in physique – known for wisdom – excelling in knowledge – unlimited in might – creating the universe, the creator has formed humankind as His masterpiece.
>
> He owns a heart. He is rich and noble in his emotions. He has a tradition. He is the cause of joy for the creator of this universe.
>
> He sustains a mental inclination that is strong enough not to breakdown even at deterioration of ideologies. That is love. It is a glorious star within a divine horizon enlightening eternally for thousands of millennia.
>
> Love is that transforms dualism to oneness with heart imbued in heart and spirit imbued in spirit. Though soft, it is firm. Though nothing, it is everything.
>
> Love makes everything positive, makes everything beautiful and makes everything soft. One who experiences love becomes an epitome of beauty in its wholeness. His wholesome beauty is akin to the wholesome beauty of a lotus enchanted by the rays of light emanating from the sun.
>
> O! Almighty, You are invisible and unknown! I have one supplication before You; allow me to be a source of selfless love; O! Lord, suppress the storm of noise within my heart; allow me to be strong and firm like You in the noble power of Divine Love!

A catastrophe of flood cannot drown Divine Love. An ocean cannot quench the thirst of Divine Love. Nothing in this universe can satisfy Divine Love that is beyond the limits of this universe.

There is no variation for true love. It is firmer than a mountain. When two human beings imbue themselves in the universal power of these super human feelings, there is no need for any formal relationship to sustain it. If there is dilution in the firmness of love, it appears in marriage. Marriage seldom origins from love, rather it comes up through physical attraction or mutual conveniences or natural requirements or through respect; that is all. Marriage appears as a namesake relationship for procreation and worldly fortunes.

A love that does not possess eternal ideals and unending firmness is not love. That is nothing more than a physical attraction, which is worldly does not sustain. That is nothing more than the intercourse between two human beings.

Divine love is the everlasting and sustainable foundation of all worlds. That itself is the central source of life for all living beings. The germs of spirit in different genders attract and imbue one with the other and this is called love in all nobility.

Love being the foundation of universe, as it really is, likes to see its creations joyous. Providential planning of creation of universe has no place for sufferings. Sorrow is the byproduct of man's fight with laws of nature.

Unsustainable love or love of a temporary nature is no love. Such a love, though we know in that name, is just a common relationship between man and woman. That is nothing but a relationship targeting satisfaction of bodily desires between man and woman; the man and woman involved therein cannot have their ideals beyond satisfying such desires; a relationship that is short term in nature!"

Love as perceived by common world is fruitless. What value is there for a love that a person or death snatch away from us! The love snatched away from us by a man or even death does

not have any value. Worldly love empties the richness of our hearts. True love has value as a wholesome, eternal, continuous, unbreakable and victorious power. It is better for a person who cannot sustain love as a wholesome, eternal, continuous, unbreakable and victorious power not to step into this most divine of all divine and noble emotional expression. This noble power is the epicenter of all thoughts, all deeds and all divinity that can never end up as a plaything for humankind.

It is not love that enchants an ordinary man or even more an ordinary woman, but it is the self-elation that someone loves him or her. This is the root cause for a common woman that she cannot continually love a dead man; she becomes wanting in her emotional enthusiasm and when there is no response, she searches for other voices. It is same for an ordinary man towards his loved one who is dead.

What is the reason for sorrows in this world that is founded in love! The reason is nothing but jealousy, the jealousy that is crueler than a sepulcher. Jealousy is one facet that is a devilish fire consuming all virtuous treasures.

Oh! This world is full of devilish voices. Instead of love and empathy, this world has a domination of evil powers showering curses after curses and dishing out damages after damages. These senseless beings sow enmity and falsities whereas the need of the day is comfort and helping hands. These evil demons suppress with despair those hearts enchanting in hope. These mean insects spread falsities against love filled in holiness, aiming annihilation of virtues. If we succeed in dismantling the evil powers whose weapons are envy, falsity, cruelty and negativism, then this world would be nothing but a true heaven.

There is a way for salvation every man of this world can follow. Confront darkness with courage. You would be facing light. Challenge all that negativism with a hope-filled heart. You would witness a covert blessing. Almighty never wish illness for you. That Divine Might has never stored any sort of cruel punishment for you. You simply submit yourself wholly at His feet and

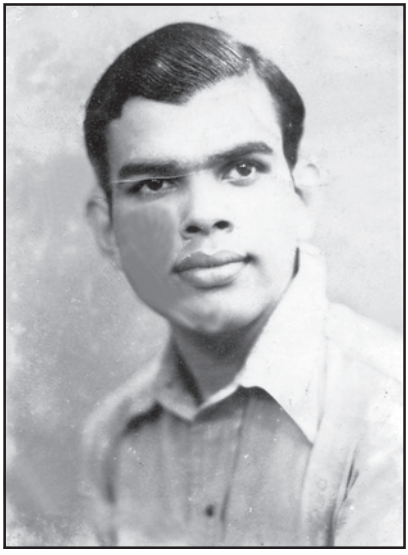
surrender wholeheartedly. You experience eternal tranquility in return.

Oh! The Noble and Divine Guide of all creations of this world, accept this humble soul in your mercy who desires to merge in your eternal presence. Strengthen this humble soul to gather everything needed for its development. Let all my deeds be beneficial to others. Let my life be a blessing to this world."

Mr C A Varkey from Kottayam had Joined P & T Department along with Varghese and they had stayed together in the rented house for a few months. He recalls, "Varghese was a hard worker. During those days, he was studying through postal tuition (correspondence course); it seems, he was studying English language. Varghese was well versed in English. He used to mingle with any sort of friendship. He was with those who were jovial and used to pass hilarious comments. Overall, he was just an ordinary man. At the same time, he was very intelligent and used to read lot of books. There were not many books, which Varghese had not read. He was not too religious or spiritual then, as I recall. Nevertheless, he used to be regular in attending church. Once in a while, he had come with me to our CSI church also."

"He possessed a beautiful handwriting and was good to deal with. He was of very good conduct and very smart. We never expected him to grow up to this level. However, we used to feel about him that he was one who cannot be contained within the limits of P&T Department." This was what Mr P T George reminisced about Paul Varghese. He was an employee of the Telephone Exchange, Ernakulam. Mr George had worked as Office Secretary at Orthodox Seminary, Kottayam for a period and passed away a few years back.

During his career in P&T Department, Varghese had his 23rd birthday. He took this as an opportunity to have an introspection of his life until then. He jotted down certain thoughts, experiences and incidents of his life in a notebook. Hereafter, he started noting incidents of importance as a continuous process. He finished this with a final part written just a couple of days prior to 24th birthday. This 'autobiography' carried 24 pages.



He penned down a short story also these days. One young woman suffering deeply from the mental illness of her mother was the central character. Readers can see a glimpse of Varghese in this nameless woman.

Paul Varghese found time to write articles for news papers and magazines. His article titled, "The Human Approach to Labor Problems" appeared in The Illustrated Weekly's issue dated 16, December 1947.

Those were days when there were no labor organizations in most of the main establishments. The employees of P&T Department at Ernakulam and nearby areas formed a union under the leadership of Syed Muhammad, Paul Varghese and T V Joseph. Their organization was 'Union of P&T Workers.' They also started an official journal 'P&T Worker.' Members of P&T's all India labor organization for its general staff located in Travancore and Cochin states were included in this union. Travancore - Cochin single union unanimously elected Paul Varghese and Syed Mohammed as its Associate Secretaries. Thus, Paul Varghese became one of the founding leaders of P&T Union and the trade union movement in Kerala.

As one of the Associate Secretaries, Varghese with his colleagues had the responsibility to organize the nationwide strike of P&T employees, the first one of its kind, against the British Government in 1946. This strike was supportive of the Freedom Struggle; Varghese and Syed Mohammed visited all the offices where Travancore - Cochin single union had its presence and met all their member employees in person to convince them of the necessity of this strike.

'To confront this strike, government declared P&T as essential service. At Vadakara, A K Gopalan (leader of Communist party

of India) delivered a speech supporting the strike of P&T employees. The Judicial Magistrate punished AKG with an imprisonment of 18 months for his supporting the P&T employees' strike as their service fell under essential services. AKG filed an appeal with the District Court at Thalasserry. Adv V R Krishna Iyer, Supreme Court Judge later, appeared for AKG. After hearing the arguments, the Judge asked him, "Mr Krishna Iyer, our P&T employees are well paid. Do you know that my Sheresthadar does not have this much salary?" Mr Krishna Iyer retorted, "Your Honor, therefore, do you mean that your Sheresthadar should have gone for a strike much earlier?" At this reply, the Judge had no answer.[9]

This is the experience a front line leader of Communist Party like AKG had. It was not easy those days to fight against the British Government. Once declares essential service, those who stayed away from duty would lose their job. However, the government allowed many of the legitimate demands of employees. At the last moment, union called of the strike to save the common people of their inconveniences.

What were your main hobbies then?

"There was a cinema house, Menaka Theatre at Ernakulam. They used to get their films through P&T channel as VPP. Normally, they come with the evening mail of the day. The film that has to go for exhibition on a particular day would come that day only; therefore, they needed it soon after arrival of the mail. If an article needs delivery immediately on arrival of mail, a special permission has to be there. I used to arrange this for which they were pleased with me. As a token of gratitude, they were allowing me to see films free of cost. I used to go for movies there, but very rarely. Similarly, during those days, mailbags were coming in buses. In order that no complaints came up against buses, they too had given me free pass to travel."

"I had worked at Ernakulam and Cochin Main Post Offices. I was Post Master for one year. It was my nature that wherever I worked, I executed my tasks in the best possible manner. I used to take leadership in all matters within the office. Higher authorities

used to pass jovial comments during their inspections that the Post Master was burdening Varghese with all sorts of office matters."

Nevertheless, the vocation with P&T Department did not make Varghese content in life. He says about those days, "I was popular and moderately happy, but basically dissatisfied with the kind of life I was living. I went to church regularly and without fail. The conversation with God continued through these years. I was always making excuses to God for the way I was living, a life not outrageously evil or sinful, but nonetheless fairly pointless: trivial pursuits, trackless wandering, unpurposive living. And no romance worth talking about. No one had come around to catch my fancy that much."

"One day news came about the sad demise of a middle aged friend of mine Dr Puthooran. He was an efficient Ophthalmologist. He was a healthy sportsman possessing a strong physique. Cardiac arrest led to his demise. His end happened at the doorstep of a Tennis Club he was entering in, holding his racquet. The news shocked me. I was too sorrowful that feelings filled with emotion overcame me. This incident prompted me to think about the perishability of life."

"This unexpected demise of my friend made me ponder over. I was 25 then, working as Telegraphist at P&T Office, Ernakulam. I had many friends. People around me had good opinion about me. Nevertheless, I lacked peace of mind. On the one hand, the pain that my mother and elder brother were mentally ill pricked my conscience; on the other hand, the question on the purpose of life kept disturbing my inner faculties. Though I did not have any bad traits in life, I was dissatisfied that I was not able to lead a life that had a prudential commitment."

"The day Dr Puthooran passed away, I was in my bedroom in the loneliness of darkness; there I conversed with my God for pretty long time. I admitted before Him that I needed to switch over to another vocation that has more opportunities for serving others and more committed to God. However, such a change was not possible if I was at Ernakulam; I promised that had it been that my location and circumstances were more amicable, I would certainly be more committed spiritually. Probably, there was a trace of evasiveness in my promise to God."

Paul Varghese prayed like this: "Yes, my Lord, I know that I can also die like that. I should change my life and make it bear better fruit. You know I want to. But you also know my friends. They will laugh at me if I become overly pious overnight. I cannot stand that. So long as I live in this society, I dare not repent or change. But I promise you, put me in a brand new environment, and I shall be a different person, totally committed to your obedience, totally dedicated. I promise."

"I knew deep down inside me that the promise was only half serious. And I was half sure that God would not take me up on my promise. There was an off chance though that He might, since I was half serious. He was soon to show me that He would."

"My God accepted the challenge the very next day. Shortly after attending the funeral of Dr Puthooran, I had travelled to Alwaye with my friend Mr Mathew and Dr R N Thompson, an Ethiopian citizen. This was a turning point leading me to my employment in Ethiopia. I need no further proof that our God would certainly interfere once we commune with Him sincerely and truly without testing or studying Him."

"My challenge before God was that I would lead a spiritually committed life if I was given a new opportunity to move on. True, this was just a sort of excuse as a partial defense; yet, God accepted it as my prayer and opened a way for me the very next day."

Varghese did not feel like consulting anyone regarding his Ethiopian offer of employment in the teaching line. He sent his application; attended a personal interview at Madras and he got the offer. Thompson and his colleague bluntly told him that Varghese was not a graduate and that he did not possess the required qualifications for appointment as a teacher; yet they were selecting him on a special consideration. Varghese signed the contract with the Education Department of Ethiopia. Only after completion of this procedure did Varghese disclose this to his father. His father pointed out that his decision to forgo an employment under the India Government Service for proceeding to an unknown African country was nothing short of a blunder. However, Varghese knew that there was no sense in any

logical argument with father. Ten years back, in 1937, Varghese had revealed his independence when father declined to support his college education reasoning shortage of finance. He bid farewell to his mother and brothers.

Varghese resigned from P&T Department for proceeding to Ethiopia. He had many good friends in P&T department; they were sad at his leaving them, yet, were happy that he was getting a good opportunity. His friends had perceived his personality in the right sense. His colleague at Ernakulam Post Office, Mr M V Mathai, had expressed the reasons for their happiness in these words: "I am sure, you will shine in whatever direction you go, as you are a man of possibilities."

Mr C A Varkey, who was staying with Varghese said while Varghese was preparing for moving to Ethiopia: "Those were days when one meal was worth just Two *Anna*. Therefore, Rs 5/- was sufficient for a comfortable living a month. Under such circumstances, a person quitting a job worth Rs 39/- a month would be extremely courageous. Had he continued in P&T Department, he would have retired as a Head Post Master, at the best. However, he was prepared to take a calculated risk. He would have had a feeling in his inner self that his vocation with P&T Department was something not matching his capabilities. This would be the reason why he thought of giving up this job. There were not many going abroad for employment those days. Even those who move out were mostly going to Singapore and Ceylon. Varghese was perhaps part of the first group from Kerala reaching Ethiopia. On the eve of his traveling to Madras, he took me to the Krishnan Nair Studio and got a photograph of the two of us. He had written one letter to me after his reaching Ethiopia."

Mr Syed Muhammad was one who had opportunities to have ideological discussions with Varghese on many occasions and they were mutually very close. Shortly after reaching Ethiopia, Varghese wrote a letter to this friend. Syed Muhammad replied this letter and the contents thereof were an indication of the warmth in their relationship. Apart from their intimacy, a thumbnail sketch of their life within P&T Department was visible in this reply:

"Dear Varghese,

Received your letter I was looking forward. I am glad that you are comfortable there. I had two letters from your brother Mr Abraham. From his letters, I could gather that you had a safe journey and reached comfortably there.

On 21/12/1947, our union had its general body meeting at the Cochin Head Quarters presided over by Mr K V Subrahmanya Iyer, Post master, Cochin. I am appending below, the resolution adopted by this meeting. Our friends did appreciate the services you had been rendering to the Department. We are sad that we are not getting your services now. However, your having left us certainly enhances the possibilities in you and you have better avenues to serve humankind; we are satisfied with such opportunities you have.

Resolution

"This meeting places on record its deep appreciation for the untiring, selfless and valuable services rendered by Mr P T Varghese as the Asst. Secretary and Treasurer during the tenure of his holding office and wish him all success in his new venture as an educational instructor in Ethiopia."

I fail to understand how you adjust to your new scenario without good friends there. By nature, you mix up with people of different characteristics to carry on with your life. Life sustains in diversity.

I am happy that you are having an aptitude in your present vocation. How are your two colleagues? Are they good friends for you? Do you have time there to work out a book on any interesting subject? Or else, you can contribute articles to dailies or weeklies. You can send me such articles for publishing them.

Let me come to our union activities. The coordination body is working hard. Talks are proceeding with the government. We have not zeroed into settling most of our rights in these dialogues. Some decision is likely to be there by the weekend. I am afraid we may be compelled to go on a strike, as the official higher

ups possess a negative attitude. I hope that they may deal with this issue in a righteous manner. By the way, disbursement of arrears is progressing. I got Rs 129/-. Since your letter of authorization is already here, there would not be any issues for your brother to collect the same.

All our friends here keep fine. Mr N K Raman Menon feels a bit bad that you did not inform him about leaving and that he could not see you off. I have convinced him that you would have missed it due to your busy schedule while leaving. I will dispatch to you P&T Worker magazine every month. The magazine had published your photo in its current edition. I am sending a copy to you by sea mail, but I do not know how long it would take it to reach you.

Please communicate information about the country where you are now, the people there, the structure of the government, the customs there and the like. How much you are able to save a month. How are the women there? In which language are you teaching there? What is their local language? Do you get any newspapers? Do you get anything there for leading a civilized life? How is the Postal Department there? How is the political scenario? Are the citizens politically alive?

All my best wishes with utmost sincerity,

Yours,

Syed Muhammad

1. Dr K M Tharakan, 'Ormayude Pookkal', DC Books, Kottayam, 1993, page 64.
2. Dr K M Tharakan, 'Paulos Mar Gregorios: Manushyanum Chinthakanum', DC Books, Kottayam, 1982, page 5, 6.
3. From a story written by Paul Varghese aged 23.
4. Dr K M Tharakan, 'Paulos Mar Gregorios: Manushyanum Chinthakanum', DC Books, Kottayam, 1982, page 6.
5. Address at the inaugural function of MG University Union, Maharajas College, Ernakulam, 1995.

6. Dr K M Tharakan, 'Paulos Mar Gregorios: Manushyanum Chinthakanum', DC Books, Kottayam, 1982, page 5.

7. Paul Manalil, 'Ee Jeevitha Yathra Ethra Dhanyam, Saphalam', Malayala Manorama, November 25, 1996, page 8.

8. From an autobiographical sketch of Paul Varghese, aged 23.

9. Ravi Kuttikkadu, 'Justice V R Krishna Iyer, Jana Hridayangalil Oru Nyayadhipan', DC Books, Kottayam, 1995, page 19, 20.

2

Into The Continent of Darkness

Ethiopia was one among the nations within the Continent of Darkness. People elsewhere came to know about this nation only with the Italian encroachment of 1937. In 1942, Emperor Haile Selassie succeeded in re entering Addis Ababa with which the most glorious chapter in the history of Ethiopia commenced.

When Italians had to leave Ethiopia, what they left behind were some big trucks and machineries, which they themselves had destroyed beyond use. Italians were experts in constructing top quality roads since long. However, they did not do much in this line during their occupation of Ethiopia because of the unexpected attack any time from local guerillas.

Ethiopia in 1942 was a location lagging behind in the means of communication, which was a major obstacle for its development. Whatever they had was just a railway line between Addis Ababa and a French township Djibouti on the cost of Arabian Sea.

Journey of Varghese to Ethiopia was one of cherished memories. The group consisted of about twenty teachers who were all experienced hands. They were either from Kerala or from Tamil Nadu. Most of them were Christians. Among them, Varghese was the only one who did not posses adequate qualifications. For taking them to Ethiopia, the Education Ministry of that country had sent a DC 3 Dakota Aircraft. Basic purpose for this type of Aircraft was transportation of goods. There were two metallic benches without cushions on either side of the Aircraft. There were enough blankets. The facilities were not even remotely matching the conveniences of today's Aircrafts. The usual passenger flights during those days were equipped more fashionable. Varghese and his new friends boarded the flight at Bombay. The Aircraft had landed at various places including another Indian Air Port as well as Aden, Masirah Island, Deeredava

and many African Air Ports. Ultimately, they landed at Addis Ababa after nineteen hours of flying. Now, it is just a matter of three hours and a half to fly from Bombay to Addis Ababa.

"We were worn out by the time we got to Addis Ababa. Some of the teachers had brought young children along. An unpleasant surprise awaited us at the Airport. After a long wait before going through immigration, we were finally told that we could not land because our inoculation papers for Yellow Fever and Cholera were not in order. There had been an outbreak of cholera in India, and we were to go directly into quarantine, in an isolation ward in a hospital in town. We had to stay in the isolation ward for several days, if I remember right."

"On about the third day, Emperor Haile Sellassie came to visit us in the hospital, to welcome us and to apologize for the inconvenience. We gathered together around the locked gate of the hospital, inside, while the Emperor stood outside the gate and talked to us through the gate by an interpreter. We should have been impressed, but we were all too worn out to feel anything but sheer fatigue and boredom. But we had seen the great man, and that was something."

"After a week or more of confinement in the isolation ward, we were released and taken to the Itegue Hotel, the only western style hotel in Addis Ababa those days. After a week in the hotel, we were given our various assignments. I was, along with two other Tamil Christians, to go to a new school, some 100 kilometers East of Addis Ababa, in the plains. The place, originally called Hadama, had been renamed Nazareth. We moved into a new house, with three bedrooms. One of my colleagues, Mr. Daniel, several years senior to me, was to be the headmaster. He, with his wife, occupied the master bedroom, while the two of us bachelors occupied the smaller bedrooms."

"I was 25, and ready for all kinds of new experiences. But I had conveniently forgotten my promise to God about repenting and beginning a new life and all that. I taught during the week, and then played bridge incessantly with fellow teachers, sometimes starting Friday evening and stopping only late Sunday night. There was nothing else to do in Nazareth."

"I taught in the third and fifth grades, teaching practically all subjects. The children were good, playful, but also highly respectful to teachers. I was quite surprised to find girls who would touch my feet as a mark of respect. I thought that was a uniquely Indian practice. Ethiopia was Sub-Sahara Africa's only literate ancient culture, and the difference was clearly visible. I enjoyed teaching and I enjoyed the children, who were polite and refined. I soon came to identify myself with the culture, and felt irritated when some of my Indian or Sudanese colleagues kept on pouring contempt on the Ethiopians, in order to feel superior."

Amharic was the official language of Ethiopia, and the Amharic teacher at the Nazareth school was a bright young man, only slightly elder to Varghese, Ato Telahun Damte (Ato is the Ethiopian equivalent of Mr.). Varghese began taking Amharic lessons from him in private, and made some progress.

The only social contact Varghese had outside the school was with a hospital managed by Mennonite Missionaries of US. Dr Paul Conrad, his wife Nancy, Dorsa Mishler, Mary Mishler, Dan Zensening and family were all friends to Varghese in a short time, there. They treated

Varghese with affection. This was the first social contact of the Metropolitan with Western Whites. Varghese took time to learn their living style. Occasionally, he attended their Sunday worship. They used to have the worship at one of their houses. Once, he attended an Ethiopian Orthodox Church, but he could not adjust himself with the worship in its language and style of presentation. The prayer meetings in that American hospital had no rituals or symbolism. Yet, he could experience the essence of worship, as the language was familiar. They too liked "Mr George." They used to call him "George" as Varghese explained to them that the meaning of his name was so.

One day, a student of Grade V came to Varghese and told him that he was not feeling well. Varghese touched his forehead to find whether he had temperature, and he indeed had. There was a small boil like thing on his forehead. The boy did not know what it was. He advised the boy to go home and after taking rest to go to the hospital to consult a Doctor. The boy had Chicken Pox and did not attend school for some days. Two weeks after Varghese touched the forehead of that boy, he too had it. Normally Chicken Pox is a disease that affects children. Once you get it when you are young, you will not have it later in your life as you had developed immunity. However, Varghese did not have it earlier and thus he was not immune.

"The attack, in my 25th year, was far from mild. The blisters were cherry-sized, and I had them all over my body. They were excruciatingly painful; new ones kept coming up every day on my head, on my back, on my face, on my chest, on my seat. I could not sit or lie down because of the blisters. I was shut up in my room, and my fellow residents of the house, Mr. Daniel and Mr. Rathinaswami, asked me to lock my door and not go out of my room, for fear of giving it to others in the house. No one came to see me, and some food was occasionally slipped in under the door, like to a convict or to a prisoner."

"The pain was sharp and intense; the loneliness was unbearable. Students wanted to visit me, but they were forbidden to do so, understandably. If I was thirsty there was no way of asking for a hot drink. I could not wash myself, or even clean my mouth and teeth.

Unable to sit or lie down, I paced my room up and down. I felt this was not quite fair on the part of God to put me through all this pain. Like Job, I wanted to ask God for an explanation."

"That is what I finally did. At the height of my pain, about the fourth day, I went and sat fiercely on my chair at my desk. The seat hurt, but I grit my teeth. Across the desk, on the wall, there was a color portrait of Christ (Salman's Head of Christ, a not too artistic American product) facing me. I started the dialogue or debate or whatever it was. I accused God of being cruel and unfair, devoid of compassion, and letting people suffer more than they deserved. I was talking quite aloud, in the anguish of my pain and the loneliness of my room, and threw a stream of abuse at the portrait of Christ. As the torrent of words rose in crescendo, I was carried away by the rhetoric of my own petulance."

"Finally, and not without hesitation, I blurted out what I knew were insolent words: "Was your suffering on the cross anything comparable to what I am going through now?" That put a stopper to the flow of my own sulky abuse. I felt I had said more than what I had a right to say. There was a calm. The experience that followed is so poignant that I have no words in which to describe it with some sense of adequacy."

"A voice came, distinct and clear. I cannot be sure that any of our modern equipment could have registered the sound waves that reached my ears and the meaning that hit my heart. I heard those words. I do not know where they came from. I was speaking to God in English, and the reply was also in English. The tone was by no means rebuking or reproving; on the contrary, it was most compassionate and tenderly loving: "Yes, my son, it was." That was all it said. But it brought about a total transformation in my condition. My pain was gone, though the blisters were still there. I was wafted up to a higher plane of happiness where pain cannot penetrate. I felt an incredible lightness of body, as if I was being effortlessly lifted up on wings of joy."

"I bowed my head in humble adoration. I surrendered myself without reservation, into the loving hands of God in Christ. And I

said, with deep contrition: “To Thee, I bow my head, Lord, to Thee I surrender myself. I am Thine. Pardon me my folly, pardon me my insolence. Take me, do with me as it pleases Thee. Break me if need be, but give me grace and wisdom and strength to walk in Thy ways. I love Thee and I bless Thee with all my heart.”

The weather at Nazareth was not conducive to Varghese; he had many health related problems there. He wished to work somewhere else because of these diversities. Paul Varghese came to learn that one Mr Sharma, a teacher at Jimma Practical Arts School looked forward to a transfer to Nazareth. Both Mr Sharma and Paul Varghese jointly applied for a mutual transfer, which found favor with Ministry of Education. Thus, Varghese got a posting at Jimma and Mr Sharma at Nazareth.

The teachers at Nazareth were sad at the transfer of Paul Varghese, their colleague. They arranged an appropriate farewell for Varghese. The contents of the ADDRESS OF SEND-OFF presented reads as under:

ADDRESS OF SEND- OFF

PRESENTED TO Mr. T. P. VERGHEUSE BY THE TEACHERS OF THE NAZARETH SCHOOL ON THE OCCASION OF HIS TRANSFER FROM NAZARETH TO JIMMA.

Dear Comrade Mr. T. P. Vergheuse,

We are indeed proud to hear that you,our comrade, are going occupy a more responsible position on your transfer from this place. lt is no flattery to say that you are highly worthy of this administrative job by virtue of your education, efficiency, patience, perseverence and above all your God-fearing nature.

For the past ten months you have been living with us enlightening us in all our undertakings; and now we shall be missing our worthy comrade and the pupils their ideal teacher. However your work as an ideal teacher will ever be remembered by one and all in this school.

May the Lord Almighty bless you with long life and all prosperity.

We have the pleasure to remain,
Your beloved comrades
(Teachers of the Nazareth School)

NAZARETH
3-1-1941*

(* This date is a per Ethiopian calendar)

After serving Nazareth School for eight months (from November 1947 to June 1948), Paul Varghese travelled in a government truck to take up his new assignment at Jimma from October 1948 with the commencement of new academic year. Jimma was located amidst coffee gardens of Kaffa about 300 km south-west of Addis Ababa. The new place of work was a UNRRA School teaching practical arts. This school came up in 1947 with the assistance of UN Relief and Rehabilitation Association. The school provided basic education, arts and handicraft to the youth who grew up in the streets as orphan children consequent to the invasion of Mussolini during 1935-41. This was part of a scheme initiated by UN for rehabilitation of provinces, which were under fascist domination in the post war period. Initially, nine Canadian families joined to run this project. The school and the family quarters for teachers were within a vast campus protected by tall compound walls and fencing. Ethiopian youth numbering about sixty were possessing tendencies of resorting to violence. Some of them had criminal instincts too.

Among those nine Canadian families, seven left the campus in the first year itself because of the tendencies of violence from students. Mr Sharma, a South Indian was in charge of classrooms (five grades). Canadians were providing training in farming and practical arts. Varghese was to take over from Sharma. The overall responsibility of this establishment was with Howard Thompson; he was the brother of Dr R N Thompson who initiated proceedings to recruit Paul Varghese during his visit to India. Howard Thompson was previously working with the Canadian Cavalry Police. However, he was not a success in maintaining discipline within the Jimma school campus.

After a tedious journey of eight hours through rough terrain, Varghese reached the campus and what he saw there was too dramatic a scene. Mr Thompson was standing on the balcony of his two storied quarters with his wife. There was a group of students assembled before the quarters. Their leader shouted to Thompson,

"If you have guts, come down from that balcony; we will kill you and burry your body." This was what they communicated in short. Their facial expressions were enough to cause fear. Varghese sincerely doubted whether they were talking after perceiving the situation rightly.

A decent looking middle aged Ethiopian from an office in a nearby building approached this gang of students; he had another half a dozen men with him. His movement was looking authoritative. He was an Ethiopian Roman Catholic named Kirubel. He was studying to join the Order of Jesuits and later served with the Army. From there, he came here and took over as the Director of Provincial Education. He was overseeing all the educational institutions in the province of Kaffa. He was having his office and residence inside this campus. He stayed in one of the houses left by a Canadian family. He presented himself in well looking European attire and covered himself with a white shawl over his jacket. He also sported an attractive beard.

Kirubel commanded in Amharic language, "All of you get back to your hostel rooms; or else I will summon the police." The students had some arguments with Kirubel; nevertheless, they disbursed from there murmuring. Varghese could not comprehend the essence of their arguments. He took his bag and baggage and moved to the residence of Sharma, which was where he was to put up.

Sharma gave detailed brief of the scenario within the campus. He was happy to see another Indian. "All their violence is against the Whites. They have not caused any problems with me. Even you would not face any problems from them." Sharma assured Varghese that he was going to have a nice time there. He was Brahmin and very good in cooking. Varghese stayed with him for two days and both these days, enjoyed very good vegetarian food cooked by Sharma.

After Sharma left the campus, Varghese re arranged the quarters to suit his convenience. He arranged a cook for him, which Sharma did not require. He went to the school and had a discussion with his students. They listened to him with respect. There was no sign of any violence or opposition from them. Many of the students were elder to 26-year-old Varghese. He invited the students to his quarters

for an evening tea. Most of them obliged and they talked happily for quite some time enjoying the tea and disbursed by 6:00 pm.

Shortly, three of them representing the whole student community returned to Varghese and stated very politely, "The incident today touched our hearts; this is the first time a teacher is inviting us to his residence and giving us a treat. You saw us as human beings and behaved so. You did not see us as criminals or hooligans. This has changed us a lot. We feel now that we too are of humankind."

Their statement touched Varghese. His eyes turned wet. The student representative spoke straight and decently. This influenced the young mind in Varghese. Not thinking much, he said, "Come to my quarters every evening by 4:00; we will have tea and talk about God. We will also study Bible for some time."

Thus, a Bible study session started at the residence of Varghese; a friendly and informal session with free will commenced. More than half the students used to participate in this. Varghese spent his energy and enthusiasm to live with these youngsters and to be active with them. They were not just schoolchildren but belonging to age group 16 to 27. They had grown up in streets. Minor theft and alcoholism were part of their nature along with sudden outbursts leading to scuffles. Within the campus and in the town, they were holding a tag of bad guys. To control them in the campus, school authorities used to seek police assistance. This did not yield any positive results; instead, they had to share with the police whatever they stole and a part of liquor they had. They had no permission to move out into the town without a teacher accompanying them. They were similar to prisoners inside the campus protected by strong fencing.

"One day I took them out for a long walk into the countryside. They were about 50, walking double file, very docile and very disciplined. Suddenly I saw them breaking formation and running to a field on the side. I was quite confident by this time, that they would not run away like that without a good reason. They were fully loyal and devoted to me within a month of my being in Jimma. I had been ahead of the procession, and could not make out what was happening. I turned and ran after them, but could not keep up with them. As we

got to that field, they had formed a circle, some of them with large stones in their hands, and there was a big wild hyena, standing in the middle, uncharacteristically furious and charging. Hyenas normally attack only sleeping people and domestic animals. When attacked they can be wild and snarling. I saw one of my boys charging the hyena with a sharp stone, and he had managed to break its lower jaw. The boys soon became as wild as the hyena, and the poor hyena had no chance. They soon overpowered it, got a rope from somewhere and tied it up, and in fifteen minutes, four of the boys had it, still living, on a pole carried on their shoulders. They made a triumphal procession through the streets of Jimma, singing patriotic songs of triumph adapted to the occasion. There was a song which Ethiopian patriotic soldiers sang often in the fight with the Italians, which began: "The patriot is poison..." (in Amharic, *Arbanha Merzanha nov*), meaning poison to the Italian enemy). They changed it to: "The Student is poison..." (*Tamari Merzanha nov*...). We took the hyena home and tied it to the tree in my yard. We wanted to heal it and keep it. But someone came and without my permission, shot it dead. Only Ato Kirubel had a rifle there. The hide of the hyena was in my house till I left Jimma."

The students used to steal blankets lavishly supplied by UN Association. Selling two blankets would be sufficient for a treat of liquor for half a dozen of them. They were carrying on this exercise for some time now. The association provided two blankets to each student, but now some of them had only one and some others, not even one.

After Varghese joined Jimma, this issue of theft ended. The School authorities were in for a surprise. They thought the influence Varghese had on students would have been the cause behind this. Nevertheless, Kirubel was not prepared to accept this. He summoned Varghese to his office one day and gave a lecture on discipline. He said that he had military experience and that he had learnt that to maintain discipline in schools, there must be a fear of strong punishments. He added that being soft towards students would be thoughtlessness and his soft corner to students was harming the overall discipline within the campus. He wound up, "The stick is the only language that they

properly understood." Varghese replied to him that he believed in the influence of love that is more powerful than that of stick. He pleaded decently that he needed consent to test his methodology. Their conversation ended retaining their difference of opinion.

However, Paul Varghese was sad that this sort of a situation arose as also to have expressed descent to his superior official. Yet, he continued with his Bible classes. Varghese did not have any deep insights to Orthodox faith, but did retain in him most of what he learned from worships at church and his Sunday school education; from these basics, what he taught from Bible was in line with Orthodox faith. Most of his students were members of Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

It happened once again, a few months after Varghese joined Jimma; two woolen blankets were found stolen. Kirubel took a stand that he would identify the culprits and that they would face severe punishment. Nevertheless, using his methodologies, he could not catch hold of those who did the theft. Therefore, he decided to punish the whole batch of students. Varghese assured Kirubel that he would attempt to identify the real culprits and if he succeeded, he would hand over them to Kirubel. Varghese further sought permission that he would impart appropriate punishment as he was in charge of the classes. However, Kirubel insisted that he alone would decide and carry out the punishment because he was holding the charge of the entire province. Varghese pleaded with Kirubel that there should not be any severe actions and that he should be merciful to the students Yet, Kirubel was adamant and proclaimed that he knew what he should do.

There were 56 students in the school at that time. Varghese gathered them together and spoke to them about the theft that happened; he explained the ethical and religious backgrounds of the act of theft. They listened to him attentively and they looked emotional.

"You know who amongst you has done this. I do not know. I request the two who did it to come forward and confess to the whole community what they have done."

They looked to one another, but were silent. Nobody opened his

mouth. Varghese gave them some time to think over. They whispered among themselves. Many of them were secretly directing their eyes in one direction. This gave rise to some doubts in Varghese. However, no one came forward to confess.

Now, Varghese brought a small box and 56 pieces of paper; he gave these pieces of paper to each of the students and asked them to jot down the names of two students whom they think did the theft. There was no need to sign the papers. They did as suggested and dropped their papers in the box.

Varghese took out the pieces of papers and sorted them. Among the papers, 54 had the same two names whereas the remaining two had different names. Probably, the two who were responsible in the theft would have jotted other names in their papers. Varghese asked these two boys to meet him at his residence before lunchtime that day.

They reported to him in time as directed; both were weeping. Varghese asked them with affection, "Why did you do this?" There was no need to enquire whether they did so. They tried to make their answer truthful. "We do not know sir. Once we get an inclination to steal, we are helpless. It looks as if some power is forcing us to steal."

Varghese felt deep empathy for them. The traits acquired during adolescence spoils one as one grows up as if there is an external compulsion to do wrong. He was not inclined to punish them. He felt like embracing the boys. Yet, he had to take some hard decisions. He spoke to them seriously that they did wrong to the school, to their fellow students and to themselves; they prayed together. They sought pardon from God.

"You need a punishment for the sake of others. You suggest what sort of punishment can be imposed on you."

"Sir, you impose any punishment as you deem fit. We will accept your punishment positively. But, please sir, do not hand over us to Kirubel sir."

"There is no way. I am your teacher, but he said, he was the one

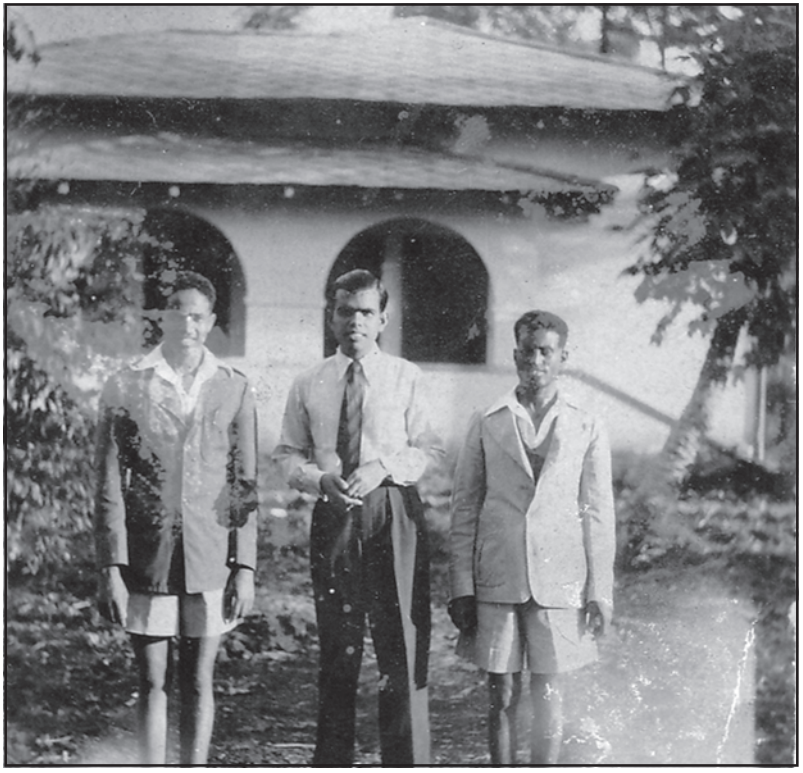
who held the authority to punish you. Though I cannot digest his stand, I have no other choice, but to present you before him. I will certainly recommend before him that he be compassionate and kind on you while deciding the punishment. But, I am really sorry; I cannot promise that he would not take stern actions."

Varghese took the boys to Kirubel and he simply said, "Let them be here; I know how to deal with them. That is not at all your responsibility."

Kirubel knew what he should do. Varghese was sad and more than that, he was boiling in anger seeing the punishment meted out to those boys. Nevertheless, he was helpless. Within the campus, there were two guardrooms; they were three feet long, three feet wide and six feet tall. Above that, there was a wall two feet high. The boys were placed inside these rooms one in one and locked from outside. Until such time Kirubel decided to unlock them, they had to be inside. Whatever be the criterion, this punishment was extremely inhuman; there was no facility for them even to satisfy their primary needs. They had no space to sit or lie down. They had to spend two days like that. Varghese was at the climax of anger and impatience, yet, he could not do anything. The students stood with Varghese. The Canadian Director Thompson had left the campus a while ago on transfer and his substitute, a Norwegian, was sympathetic. Other teachers too stood with Varghese. The Bible classes continued as usual. One day, Mrs. Kirubel sought permission to attend the Bible class and Varghese smelt something wrong. Nevertheless, he allowed her; this was part of an attempt by her husband to peep into what were going on in the quarters of Varghese, with the help of his wife.

After a few days, Kirubel released an order that contained directives such as, "Students are not to go to the quarters of teachers; teachers are not to take religious classes for students at their quarters." This order addressed the students as well as teachers. Apart from this order, Kirubel met the students at the dining hall and prohibited them from going to the quarters of Varghese.

"I was not aware of this development until the students came to me and disclosed it. On the same day Kirubel instructed them not to



visit teachers' quarters, a group of students came to my quarters in the evening as usual. We had tea followed by the Bible class. After this, they informed me about this prohibition. They were prepared to disobey this directive of Kirubel, but I discouraged them and assured them that I would enquire the matter. Next day, I went to the office of Kirubel. I was surprised at the way some of the clerks there reacted to me. They were using words literarily belittling me or mocking me. 'You came here from India and grew fat eating at our expenses.' These Ethiopian clerks were in friendly terms with me before. What a change is this! I wanted to talk to Kirubel, but the staff told me that he had gone to Addis Ababa."

As the teachers en bloc objected to the directive of Kirubel, he had to call for a teachers' conference. In this conference, Varghese explained the stand he had taken. At the end, Kirubel had to admit before the teachers that the decisions from his side were wrong.

After the above conference of teachers, students expressed their willingness to come to the quarters of Varghese, but he discouraged them. Along with that, he cancelled the Arithmetic class scheduled for December 3. Within a few days, Varghese received another order from Kirubel.

Varghese gave a strongly worded reply to Kirubel reflecting his courage in himself and his viewpoints on education. The content of his reply is here.

"Respected sir,

I received your letter. About that, I would like to report as under.

Regarding continuation of the meetings as indicated in your letter, Mr Stokland and I had explained the purpose of such meetings very specifically in our conference the other day and you had admitted that your actions were wrong and you even repented openly. After such admissions and repentance, you have sought further explanations from me through the above letter, which has surprised me. During the above-referred conference, you had even sought pardon from us.

Nevertheless, I deem it appropriate to give you a specific

clarification regarding what I had been doing, as you have raised a few questions to me.

As an Officer with the Department of Education, I presume, you are aware of the basic fact that education does not confine exclusively to learning how to read and how to write; neither does it confine to learning art and handicrafts alone. The real purpose of education, as far I perceive, is character formation on one side and learning how to address various issues in life on the other side; one should earn strength to overcome various critical situations coming across life.

The two likely obstacles to character formation are superstitions and lack of awareness of God. In this country, lack of awareness of God and superstitious practices are rampant among all categories of people. The royal government of this country has sought my services here in the field of education. Therefore, I am duty bound to implement my concepts of education in ways and means helpful to the social, cultural and ethical development of this country. If I have to carry out this responsibility effectively, I have to utilize the best available methodologies, which do not contradict the terms of my contract as also the rules and regulations of this country.

I have been staying in this country for the last more than a year. During this period, I had the opportunity to mingle with different categories of people of this country intimately. I have understood them pretty well. The reason for the people in this country being too immoral in life irrespective of them being educated or not has to be attributed to their corrupted Christian faith as I infer.

Based on this, I thought it would be beneficial to the community at large to provide guidelines to my students on every Saturday and Sunday enabling them learning Holy Scriptures. I am quite aware of the terms and conditions contained in the contract prohibiting me from propagating my religion or teaching my views on religion. As you had stated in our conference, Holy Bible is a text that has acceptance as one of the basics of all Christian denominations. Whatever I taught them were on Holy Bible; I had never propagated the faith or rituals of my Church. Therefore, there is no way that I broke the terms and conditions laid down in my contract.

Secondly, I am a member of Orthodox Syrian Church that has a faith in alignment with those of Alexandrian and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches. Therefore, the faith I am following is similar to the faith of most of my students. My faith is in line with the faith of Ethiopian National Church.

Under such circumstances, Bible classes at my personal residence are not contradicting the terms and conditions of my contract. I have never pressurized my students to attend these classes. Bible classes were there only at such time they were not having regular classes.

As you know very well, students of the Practical Arts School are elderly ones drawn from the streets. You have been telling me that most of them are very immoral. Only Christian faith can impart some influence in them. I had been attempting to teach them the evil impacts of intoxication and other immoral deeds based on Holy Bible and in relation to their physical and mental health. I understood that the influence of Holy Bible in them were substantial. Many of them liberated themselves from unfaithfulness, disobedience and other evil traits in their character. This happened because the Bible classes at my residence inculcated in them a true perception of Christian faith.

Your wife Moizero Stella who had taken part in my Bible classes more than once would certainly witness that I had not been teaching religious faith. Moreover, she had told me that even you too wish to participate; I was waiting to welcome you to my classes happily. You and I used to have rather frequent discussions about the issues related to the public opinion about this school. Nevertheless, you have not even once hinted your discordance to my Bible classes.

However, on December 2, you met my students at their dining hall and prohibited them from coming to my house. This was a blunt insult to my individuality as I said in the last conference. Though you sought pardon for your deeds, I am sorry to point out that you were not at all seriously concerned about that. In any other country, students can sue any official for compensation who behaves like this to them. Yet, I am seeing this incident as a petty one. I had a consultation with Mr Stokland and banned students to come to my residents though they were keen to continue as hitherto. Likewise, I withheld the

Arithmetic class planned for December 3.

I had told Mr Stokland that I would wait until your return from Addis Ababa and as soon as you returned, I would question your right to insult me openly like this. This is the purpose behind we called the meeting you have mentioned in your letter.

I request your good will and patience to understand the following issues. (1) There is no law that justifies your right to control my individual freedom. You have no authority to prohibit my students from visiting me at my residence so long they desire so. (2) You have no authority to ban or prohibit any get together in my residence that is against the law of the land or against the terms and conditions of my contract. (3) I hold the charge of Academics in the Practical Arts School; moreover, I am carrying out the responsibilities of the Head Master. What you can do is to pass on any directives or orders meant for the students through the proper channel, through the Director of the School or through the Head Master. (4) Considering what I have stated above, your actions prohibiting the get together at my residence are unjustifiable. Your statement, 'my actions regarding the get together in no way affect your individuality' is absurd and not matching commonsense."

Apart from this, Varghese wrote a letter to Dr R N Thompson who had recruited him from India, explaining the incidents at Jimma in detail, as shown below:

My Dear Doc,

Greetings in His name. I am so sorry to hear that you have not received my previous letter. It was sent through K. in a cover addressed to Mr. Philip. So he has betrayed me. It does'nt matter. I had written only the truth in it.

I had written the details of what he has been trying to do here. I am sure Miss Gundesen has already written to you all about it. May be, she has written to you about the results of our meeting too. He came down from Addis last week, with the Veterinary Doctor, since we had sent him a telegram that the cows were sick. Mr. Stokland asked for a meeting, and Miss

Gundesena and I and Degefe attended. In the beginning K's attitude was that Mr. Stokland had no right to call this meeting, since he thought what he had done was one of his administrative duties and that it did not affect us in any way. When we forcefully brought home to him that he had insulted us by going over our backs and asking the boys not to come to our houses, he was convinced and said that it was his 'mistake' and that he was sorry about it. He begged our pardons, but we feel that he did it just because he had to. We asked for an assurance that this will not happen again, which he readily gave us.

I asked him what right he had to stop my boys from coming to my house or any body else going to anybody else's home for that matter. He repeated his old story that there is public opinion that this was a religious school, and that he had to combat it. He told us how some of the Tillik Sows of the place told him that all his schools were religious schools, and he denied it, without any result whatsoever. He personally believed that there was no religious education being given in the compound and thought that the whole thing was due to the stupidity of the public! He said that he only wanted to change the wrong impression prevalent among the public, and that therefore he thought it necessary to stop all kinds of meetings in the teachers' houses.

I told him that I was an Orthodox Christian and that nobody could prohibit me from teaching the Bible to the boys. I felt that Miss Gundesen also was not teaching any religion, but only the Bible, but that if he thought it inadvisable he could stop it, but not my class. He replied that this had nothing to do with religion and that it was only a matter of public opinion. He said that he personally had respect for all religions, including the stone-worshippers. I then had to tell him that I thought all this was due to the simple fact that he did not like the Bible. He said that he had studied the Bible, fullstop, semicolon and all, and that everything was in his head. He said that he himself liked to teach the Bible and that we were free to teach to in the class rooms during the morals periods. Mr. Stokland inter-

vened to say that he thought that K was an enemy of the Bible and Christ. He put his hands over his ears as if we were speaking sacrilege. In any case he did not budge from his point, but said that this was not only in Jimma, but all over the province that the Bible classes had to be stopped. He said that he would keep his ears open to see what the public said, and that if they did not change their impressions, we could restart the classes; but the man added the words, ... Then we asked him if this was his own doing, or if he had orders from Addis. He said he was responsible for the province and did not need any orders to do things like this.

The point is this now, Sir, I am asking you to do me a favour, the second time I ask for one. You know that I belong to the Orthodox faith (The Syrian Church of Malabar), which is the same as the Ethiopian Church in every matter of faith. Only the rituals are different. His Majesty knows about my church. I have heard that H.I.M. has received communion from one of our Bishops when he came to this country many years ago. So please seek an interview with him about and me, that I am desirous of opening a Sunday School in this compound. I will see that only things which are not against the Orthodox faith will be taught by me. Explain to him about most of the boys being orphans. Who can be potential crooks if they are not given the required moral education. I can give references about myself from one of our Bishops back home. In Addis Mr. Hafiz Dawood or Mr. Dmitri will be able to speak for me. I know the trend of things in this country, and how difficult a thing I am asking you to do. I know that I myself am taking quite a risk, but I am not anxious about myself, so long as what I do is to the glory of His name.

I would request that your opinion about me and about my character should not stand in the way. It is an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances that has made you misunderstand me in more than one respect. I don't say that I have always been what I now am. But still, I have never been as bad as you may perhaps think. That does'nt matter in this case.

I will be looking forward with anxiety to your reply. If you think it advisable that I should have an interview with H.I.M., I will be glad to come and do that. I am grateful to you for all that you have done in the past. Do pray over this request of mine, and do what He lays on your heart to do.

My sincere wishes to you for a Blessed and Fruitful New Year. May He help you to overcome your weaknesses and lead you from Victory to Victory.

Yours in Him

T. P. Verghese

After few days of the above incident, Varghese received a memo from the Ministry of Education at Addis Ababa specifically stipulating that students should not go to the residences of teachers for any reason. That memo pinpointed that Varghese neither had any right whatsoever to have get together of students at his residence nor teaching them matters related to religion.

Varghese reached his quarters and prepared a strongly worded reply to that memo from Ministry of Education. He also understood that there was a change in the atmosphere of Jimma town. All the Ethiopians turned against him outside the campus. People used to point their fingers on Varghese and talking among themselves while he was strolling in the streets. They looked like mocking him. Even among students, the earlier friendliness seemed to have diluted. It was as if a veil of uncertainty covered the community. Many students appeared to hide from his sight. Yet, some of the senior students maintained their relationship with Varghese as usual. They told him that somebody was spreading malice about him all over the town. They did not disclose the real matter to him. Nevertheless, Varghese came to know about them, though a few months later.

"Wherever I went out of my house, I had the feeling that I was being watched and followed, day or night. One day some of the senior boys said to me: "We are forbidden to come to your home. But there is no prohibition against going out for a walk on campus. Let us go out to the bushes on that hill and sit there and pray." It was a moonlit

night, not too cold. We went out and sat in an open space among the trees. As we talked, I thought I saw some movement in one of the bushes. I looked more carefully, and I thought I saw parts of a white coat. I said to the half dozen students who had accompanied me: "I thought you Ethiopians were pretty smart. I did not think that one of you would wear a white coat if you wanted to spy on someone on a moonlit night." I said it in Amharic, loud enough to be heard by whoever was in the bush. Suddenly the bush began moving furiously, and I saw a student in a white coat dashing away to escape being recognized by us. We laughed, but the feeling of being watched grew on me as time went on. I felt a battery of persecution had been turned on me. It hurts me when people refuse to talk to me, and I know that they hate me or have contempt for me."

"Those few weeks before I left Jimma were again hell, like the hell I suffered at home in India when my mother went sick. But there was a difference. Spiritually, this was the most enriching experience of my life. For, in the midst of persecution, I could rejoice inwardly. The words of Jesus made fresh sense to me: "Blessed are you when they revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, on account of me. Rejoice and exult, for great indeed is your reward in the heavenly realms" (Matt. 5:11-12)."

"I understood that Jesus was not talking about any future reward in life after death. The reward or wages can be enjoyed here and now. I was happy inside, and could pray for hours at a time, praising God for being counted worthy of thus experiencing the mystery of rejoicing in the midst of suffering. It was a spontaneous, exhilarating, life-giving joy. It was an experience as constitutive of my spiritual life as the episode in my room in Nazareth, only a few months before. But I wonder if the joy of Jimma would have been possible without the nightmare of Nazareth and the catharsis of encounter with Jesus. In any case, I can testify that during those weeks I experienced simultaneously the depth of suffering produced by mockery, persecution and ostracism on the one hand, and great gushes of spiritual joy welling up within me right amidst all that suffering, especially when engaged in prayer."

It was a bit late to get a reply to my strongly worded letter to Addis Ababa. The reply was a telegraphic styled one: "Pack off your belongings immediately and report at Addis Ababa."

Varghese got ready to travel to Addis Ababa. Since he could not meet Kirubel to bid farewell, he handed over a letter at the office addressed to Kirubel. This was the letter:

My Dear Ato Kirubel,

I am very sorry to leave Jimma, without saying good-bye to you.

I hope you have had a good trip down south, and that you are in good health.

I wish to make use of this opportunity, to express my gratitude to you for co-operating with me in official matters, though we have had our own little personal differences.

I am enclosing herewith the list of medicines to be bought for our clinic.

I am very sorry to leave this school. I am sure you will get some better man in my place.

The Lord God will bless you if only you will turn your heart to him. 1 need not tell you this, because you know it better than I do. However I request you as a friend to turn to Him and try to please Him rather than to please men.

I will be praying for you. Hope to see you before I leave Addis. My best wishes to you.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

T. P. Verghese

Varghese reached Addis Ababa after a week. He was mentally prepared to board a flight to India and reported at the office of Mr Akaleworq Habtewold, Director General of the Ministry of Education at Addis Ababa. Varghese showed the message he received at Jimma to the Private Secretary, who was from Goa. Seeing this, the PS was

surprised. He could not identify who sent that message. Nevertheless, he assured Varghese that he would find out.

Varghese waited patiently at the visitors' room of the Ministry of Education for more than 30 days, but had no clue why he was there. One of these days, the Deputy Director General Efraim Boru noted certain factors of injustice as he was examining the file pertaining to Varghese. He was having serious differences of opinion with his superior during those days. He pushed Varghese to the chamber of the Director and shouted, "Can you just disclose why this man is summoned here? He has been waiting here for the last more than three weeks not knowing why he is here."

Even without getting up from his chair, Mr Akaleworq simply retorted to Ephraim, "I don't want even to see his face. Take him out from here."

This statement mocked at Varghese personally. Ephraim took Varghese to his office, pulled his own hair in disappointment and said in despair, "I don't want to continue working at this doomed place. It is better for me to quit and go elsewhere." Nevertheless, he regained his cool in a while and advised Varghese, "Don't get disheartened. You have an option to prefer an appeal before the Emperor."

The Indian Association in Ethiopia was initiating efforts to bring the issue of Varghese before the authorities. They called a meeting and invited Varghese to give a talk. He spoke at the meeting expressing thanks to his compatriots for their concern for him. He briefed them the background of his issues. He told them openly that he was undergoing these persecutions in the name Jesus Christ and therefore, there is no need for them to take any trouble.

The only way Varghese had now was to prefer an appeal before the Emperor. He met Dr R N Thompson, the Canadian Advisor to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, who expressed his sympathetic concern. The highly influential Dr Thompson managed to ascertain the allegations leveled against Varghese. Nevertheless, he did not disclose them at that time. Varghese understood what these allegations were on a later occasion. The three allegations were: (1) Varghese

belittled Ethiopia and the Emperor; (2) Varghese was misusing his position as a teacher in contravention to his contract with the Government of Ethiopia by engaging in religious propaganda and forced conversion of students; (3) The true motive behind Varghese inviting students to his residence was homosexuality.

Dr Thompson told Varghese that the authorities have decided to deport him to India stamping him as an 'undesirable alien.' They have already passed on necessary information to the Government of India and that they have arranged his flight ticket to Bombay. Therefore, Varghese might have to return any time.

Varghese received good help from Dr Thompson to prepare an appeal addressed to the Emperor Haile Selassie and he took time to personally hand over the appeal to Mr Teferra Worq, the Private Secretary to the Emperor. Teferra Worq was a very close friend of the Director General of Education Mr Akaleworq Habtewold and therefore, Varghese did not cherish any hope that his appeal would reach the Emperor. He was getting mentally prepared to return to India. The appeal preferred before the Emperor was like this:

TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAILE SELLASSIE I,
EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA

May it please Your Imperial Majesty,

Your Imperial Majesty's Most Loyal Obedient Servant, T. P. Verghese, Indian Teacher, Ministry of Education, Imperial Gevernment of Ethiopia, begs leave to submit

That he is one of the first group of Indian Teachers who came to Ethiopia in November 1947,

That he has been working at Nazareth School for about ten months and at the practical Arts School, Jimma for the last five months,

That his work and conduct have been satisfactory as can be seen from the reports about him in the Shoa provincial office Records, or as can be testified by Ato Ephraim Borrou and Dr. R. N. Thompson,

That as a Christian Teacher belonging to the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church of South India, he thought it his duty to help the students of his school in Bible Instruction on a voluntary basis, when the students came to his house for such purpose,

That the Director of Education of Kaffa province prohibited such classes in his home, by his letter No. 488/4/U dated 16th Tahsas 1941, and that the classes had therefore to be dicontinued,

That he had to reply to the letter of the provincial Director, setting forth his claims to conduct such classes, and showing that the provincial Officer had no right to stop these classes,

That the Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa, in their letter No. 3954/2263 dated 27th Tir 1941 asked him to come over to Addis Ababa with all his things and report to the ministry of education Office,

That he did so on Yekatit 8th, but has not received any orders or had any hearing till now,

That he now understands that there is a likelihood of his being deported from this country with at being given a hearing,

That he feels he has done nothing wrong or against the laws of this country, and therefore

THAT HE APPEALS TO YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY, as minister of Education and as the Protector of the just, that Your Imperial Majesty will look into his case and see that justice is done to your Imperial Majesty's Most Loyal and Obedient Servant,

T. P. Verghese

Addis Ababa,
23rd February 1949

Next day, there was an unexpected development. The Secretary (from Goa) of Mr Akaleworq Habtewold rushed to Varghese and requested him to meet the Director immediately. Varghese entered

his chamber expecting to receive the order of dismissal. As Akaleworq could not speak English, he had an interpreter with him.

In a rough tone, the Director asked, "Who are you?" expecting a reply in English, but Varghese chose to answer in his erroneous Amharic.

"I am Paul Varghese, a humble Indian teacher employed by your ministry, working till now in Jimma. I have come to Addis Ababa, in response to this telegram, which you sent me. I have been here for 35 days now, and I have not been able to find out why I am here and so badly mistreated. I have discharged my duties responsibly, and would like to know why you treat me with such contempt."

This reply from Varghese was in Amharic language with reasonably good flow and somewhat literarily rich in style. Akaleworq was a little surprised. Even the interpreter who had no opportunity to transliterate appeared impressive. The Director General pulled out a paper from his table drawer. Varghese immediately identified this as his letter of protest dispatched months earlier. Flashing the paper, he asked Varghese, "Would you dare to write a letter to your government in such an ill mannered language?"

"Sir, in my country, if a government officer wrote to me the kind of insulting letter you wrote to me, to which this was my response, I would probably have taken him to court." Obviously I was bluffing. But I continued, in the same spirit of bluff and bravado: "Sir, I love the Ethiopian people. In the one year that I have been privileged to serve Ethiopia, I think I have served the people well. I will go back to my country as a friend of the Ethiopian people. Please do not worry about my being able to get another job in India. For many years I was a journalist. My livelihood is assured, if I just write a few stories in the newspapers about my experience in Ethiopia, and about this ministry of Education. Thank you, good bye."

The boasting of Varghese worked much better than he expected. The Metropolitan believed that God's hand intervened here and acted. The Director General now sported a broad smile on his face and invited Varghese to take his seat, as he was standing all these time.

"Mr Varghese, be seated. We not at all desire that you should

leave this country. I am impressed with your personality and your depth in our language. The report I received about you would have been misconceived. I will certainly enquire into that. In fact, we had decided to de port you to India; we are cancelling that decision now. I would like you to function as a teacher here, in another school located in another province. Just for the sake of placing in the file, I would like to have a letter from you as an expression of apology."

"Sir, I do not know what to apologize for. My conscience is clear and I have nothing to confess. As for continuing to work in this country as a teacher, I will finish the present contract, which runs until 1950. I will not work a day longer in this country." What Varghese said was in line with his deep faith in God as well as underlining his dignity. There was a decent smile on his face, which had all its nobility. Akaleworq was also smiling that was a sign of friendliness.

"Do not be in a hurry to decide how long you will work with us. We will decide that later. And it does not matter what you write in the letter of apology. I need a letter from you for my file. Write anything you like."

"Well, Sir, would you mind if I stated in my letter that I was giving the apology at your request?''

"I don't care. Give it to my secretary, today if possible." Waving his hands, Akaleworq stood up indicating that the meeting was over. The interesting letter of apology Varghese submitted is as under:

Addis Ababa,
March Ist 1949.

From,

T. P. Verghese,
C/o Mr. K. O. Philip,
Haile Sellassie Secondary School,
Addis Ababa.

To

Ato Akalework Habtewold,
Director General,

Ministry of Education,
Addis Ababa.

Ref: Yr letter 4820/2263 dated 17-5-41.

Respected Sir,

With reference to your above letter and in continuation of our personal interview at 10. A.M. today in your office, I wish to express my regret in understanding that you feel offended at my letter dated 21st Tahsas 1941 addressed to Ato Kirubel Basha, Director of Schools, Kaffa Province.

Though I feel perfectly justified in all my actions hitherto, since my letter referred to earlier seems improper to you, it is a pleasure for me to comply with your request to apologise.

I wish to make use of this opportunity to express my gratitude to you for having allowed me to explain things in person.

Awaiting your further orders, and wishing to remain,

Yours Respectfully,

T. P. Verghese

His experience at Jimma played a crucial role in formulating faith and religious stands in Varghese about which he has said these: "This was a very important experience in my life. There was not even any small error from my side. When people had been belittling me, I used to recall Biblical verses. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." This verse used to haunt me very often. I could pray for hours at one stretch. I used to read a lot from Holy Bible. I spent those days depending exclusively in God. I believed that nothing would happen to me if God were with me; Even if the entire world stood against me, I am safe, if God is with me. This faith strengthened in me steadily. I was at Jimma for about just four to five months. I had lot of experiences in life during that short period. They were not exactly sufferings. I used to be happy in mind when people used to

blame or misunderstand me. Since my conscience was clear, I had mental happiness. I developed the capacity to pray for long time and I had time for that. At one stretch, I could sit and pray for long hours, say five hours and more. That was an encouraging experience. Only in sufferings and opposition from others, I could pray like that. Afterwards, perhaps, I could not. All of us can pray like that for hours together when the world moves against us."

"My experiences at Nazareth and Jimma are important in my life equally. They are two stages of development. I made a commitment at Nazareth. At Jimma, I understood a few things like the essence of believing in God, the sense behind sustaining in faith through sufferings and the meaning of 'rejoice in your sufferings.' It was a fascinating experience. It was very important for me in the spiritual dimension. My Nazareth and Jimma experiences and the Bible classes conducted for students at different centers were helpful in strengthening my religious concepts."

To a question whether the Metropolitan cherished a wish to serve Christ, he answered in the affirmative. "Yes, but instead of serving Christ, I had written during those days and told some people that one should serve the Church. However, I did not have any desire then to join the clergy by serving the Church. I have been telling to serve the Church instead of serving Christ to bring clarity on this concept to many."

Within a few days, Varghese received a posting order from the Ministry of Education. His new assignment was to teach English and Mathematics in the famous Agricultural College at Ambo. This place was less than 100 km from Addis Ababa. In effect, it was a sort of promotion and recognition to his caliber. Thus, Varghese, a teacher chosen for schools got elevated as a college teacher.

After reporting at the Agricultural College, Varghese came to know that everybody there had heard about the Jimma episode. In fact, it spread throughout Ethiopia and people understood that it was a false allegation against Varghese.

Varghese had no clue as to whether the Emperor had directly interfered in the matter. What he knew was that from the office of

the Emperor, his Secretary had phoned up the Director General of Education. Varghese did not pay a direct visit to the Emperor; he did not even get any reply to his appeal preferred before the Emperor.

Thus, curtain came down for the hard days of tests. The Jimma experience and its Addis Ababa remnants ended up as a school of prayer in the life of Varghese. He spent endless hours in prayers with a heart filled in joy and a clear awareness of the presence of God. Nominal tribulations for the sake of God started sanctifying the person Varghese. Spirit of God splendored him. That fascinating Light inside the heart of Varghese had a true heavenly touch.

The sufferings in the life of Varghese turned out to be the key opening the door of hidden mysteries in his life. The first and foremost lesson he learned was passing through sufferings for truth was not just undergoing any sort of sufferings like what he had during his young days in India or even what he had at Nazareth. Suffering for truth unjustifiably and someone mocking at you for your good deeds all turned up as noble experiences for him. It is important that your faith must be strong and uncorrupted to strengthen your experiences. Uncorrupted conscience is equally important. While undergoing sufferings, there should not be any sort of hatred or anger in you.

Being joyous in the midst of sufferings seal your faith in your Lord who is rich in love. All our doubts just vanish. Your faith does catch hold of new roots at their depth. The experience of rejoicing and experiencing the love of God in the midst of painful sufferings made the faith of Varghese strong and safe. Therefore, it became easier for him to take up risky challenges to follow the will of God. He kept moving forward ever since.

* * * * * * *

The new place of work, Ambo was a center famous for health-oriented bathing. The town had an abundance of hot water streams. The soil had a mix of volcano residues. The water connections at houses had mineral rich warm water flowing out. Many people from various parts of the country used to visit Ambo to take bath in this healthy water. This water used to be collected in bottles for sale across the country. The Emperor had a summer residence in this

town. The Agricultural College at Ambo was the only one of its kind in the whole of Ethiopia.

Paul Varghese had a keen desire to pursue studies in college after passing SSLC, but his family situations did not make it happen. Since then, he had in his inner self a disturbing pain that this simple desire remained just an unrealized dream. Now he is happy to some extent that he has this unexpected fortune to teach in a college though he did not have college education.

"The Agricultural College in Ambo, jointly run by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education, was also run by a team of Canadian Christian teachers, and they gave me a hero's welcome, since they had all heard about the Jimma episode. At first I had to stay for a few weeks in a rather shabbily run hotel. I soon moved on campus, lodging with another Canadian teacher with his own family and children. They were under transfer orders and soon left, leaving the house to me."

"The teaching assignment was a bit on the tough side for me. I was asked to teach English and Mathematics. English and Algebra were not difficult. They were after all my own favorite subjects as a high school student. I had not, however, counted with having to teach Trigonometry, which I had never studied in school. In the Trigonometry class, I told the students, several of whom were older than I (I was just past 26), that it was their bad luck that they had a teacher who had never studied the subject before. I promised to keep ahead of them by learning at home. But where I did not know the solution to some problem, I did not try to bluff my way through. I told them plainly that I did not know. And they liked that kind of honesty. They cooperated most heartily. Sometimes one of the brighter boys would show me how to solve it, always politely and deferentially. No loss of face for me."

"Students at Ambo maintained very cordial relations with me. I used to take Bible classes for them as I did at Jimma. There were close to 30 students for such classes. Nobody chose to raise objections. They were happy with these classes and had good opinion. There were no differences of opinion. This made me a lot satisfied.

Everybody understood that the allegations made by Kirubel at Jimma were ill conceived. Nobody believed in those allegations. One or two Canadians had come to Ambo on transfer from Jimma; from these teachers, people realized the truth behind the infamous episode. More or less now, I felt interested in Philosophy and started reading such books."

It was during these days, Varghese read the famous 'Das Capital' of Carl Marx and 'Life in Freedom' of J Krishna Moorthy and such other well-known Eastern and Western classics. After reading 'Das Capital', he wrote a letter to one of his friends on November 26, 1949: "To understand the essence of what is written in this book, one has to read each of its sentences two or three times. In principle, I agree with Das Capital."

These days, Varghese spent part of his time to learn Indian Philosophy, which led him to certain wrong inferences. Nevertheless, he gave away such inferences after perceiving things the right way.

"40 years ago, I had stored in my inner faculties parts of Adwaitha Vedanta of Shreeshankara, Vishishta Adwaitha of Shreeramanuja and Dwaitha Vedanta of Madhavacharya. I thought that these were the core of the Indian tradition of Philosophy. Later on, I could perceive that the aggregate of thoughts presented by Shreeshankara, Shreeramanuja and Madhavacharya whom we acknowledge as renowned universal masters, reveal just the medieval philosophy of Indian tradition. Buddhist Philosophy and Jain Philosophy are like a vast ocean akin to a huge temple of thoughts; I have not much of an idea how to explain Indian tradition comprehensively. Nevertheless, I am now more aware of many segments of that tradition which were sidelined in the course of time."

Varghese wished to share with others the Divine Light he experienced. He attempted to make many others understand the love of Christ. He used to get letters from few of his relatives and friends from Kerala. Some such letters prompted him to think and study more on different aspects of life. These letters did play certain roles in formulating his thought processes and his outlook. He used to reply these letters type writing them in English, often quite lengthy. They

reflected the views and thoughts he possessed those days. A letter he addressed to one of his good friends Lonan Pillai on March 25, 1949 is here:

My dear Lonan Pillai,

I am thankful to you for your letter I received a few days back. As I was travelling most of these days, I could not find time for attending to letters I received these days.

The reason why I am not writing in Malayalam, our mother tongue is not because I am ashamed to write in Malayalam; again, it is not that I am unable to coordinate my thoughts in that medium. On the other hand, English is the medium more suitable to enlighten sharp thoughts at a higher pedestal. As you are quite at home with the language of English, I believe, you will not take this seriously.

Your argument entertained me to a good extent. Through your thoughts, I could gather a picture of how the mental faculties work in a modern learner. However, I cannot agree with your following the path of universal doctrine of atheism in search of eternal truth.

'Reason' and 'Logic' are two attributes guiding one to understand this universe. However, one desirous of understanding 'Truth' depending on these two attributes alone will end up in a disastrous failure.

If you look forward to understand eternal truth, you must attempt to overcome the characteristics of the inherent limitations in our personality.

As we are aware, Logic is an incorrect science. Pure logic founded on undeniable theoretical concepts can lead one to end up with untruth. We know many Advocates who are relying on methodologies of logic to prove wrong those things known to be right to everybody.

The five senses are the basics for logic. Senses have limitations, as already established comprehensively. As an example, how far can we see? To what extent can we hear voices from a distance? Things we do not know are unbelievably more than things we know. Any scientist will vouch today that the knowledge man has acquired over

thousands of years is not sufficient to even peep into the Infinite Laboratory that can be called creative force.

Once man shows willingness to acknowledge his lack of knowledge about the limitations of human intellect, source of life and future status of life, he will start receiving the necessary explanatory revelations of the mysteries of humankind of this universe.

H G Wells believed in the eternity of humankind and considered himself as the prophet of optimism; he believed in humankind formulating one's own redemption and propagated that 'Invisible God' was the individualization of human ideologies. He died unsatisfied with his life. He was aware of the truth towards the fag end of his life. Ingersoll and Voltaire were sincere in their logical thought processes. They also became aware of the eternal truth towards the end of their life. You believe in Reason and Logic; at the same time, you accept the Theory of Evolution, which has no recognition as a thought process. Why do you accept it? If you can believe in a theory that has not found universal acceptance as there is no conclusive proof, why can't you accept a faith formulated on the strong foundation of Jesus Christ? It will provide you a strength you look for; miracles will happen in your life. You have time to come to a decision. Use this opportunity as early as possible to avoid reasons to repent in future. Do not let you run after falsities like communism and theory of evolution. Once you enter into the inner faculties of communism, you will realize that they do not believe in truth. You will also understand that truth and ethics maintain relative association with capitalism and these theories stand shoulder to shoulder.

Good, my dear friend, there nothing called truth in anyone today. Capitalism is the biggest enemy of true religion. A capitalist tames religion to match his tastes or he formulates it. Therefore, religion is a means for the capitalist and the priesthood for their survival exploiting others under the guise of religion as experienced by the suppressed labor class of people. Priesthood is a worse threat than capitalist is to true religion and welfare of humankind.

If you are in search of truth in its reality, you need not look into different religious segments and priesthood. Today, priesthood is

turning a profession. Religion has been losing its credibility. You do have religion without a priest. Look at Jesus Christ who travalled across the streets of Nazareth and Galilee having the same emotions we have, the same body as we have and the same blood as we also have. Listen to the pictures of Jesus Christ from the Gospels according to St Matthew and St John, who had spent their good days with him. They had no reason to say something that was not true. You need not look at his power evidenced through his miraculous deeds. You just look at the humanity in him, the man in him.

Without any pre-conceived notions and with a clear mind, you look into the narrations of gospels and you have his picture in its wholesomeness. You can see Jesus there in varying facets. You can see Jesus working hard with his family at the carpenter's workshop; you can see him as a good neighbor; you can see him in prayer at the valleys; you can see his relationships developed with men and women of different characteristics.

My dear young brother, just have close look into this lasting love. This will address all your problems. This is not a common vision. Let us not live as simple visionaries. Let us look upon the personification of lasting love.

God is love. Look to the man Jesus Christ and believe that he is your redeemer. He died on the cross for your sins. Believing may be a small thing, but often, we believe in something else and fall in sin. We believed in the fallacy that we would be like God on eating the fruit of the tree at the middle of Eden; how pathetic is our status now! This is the result of our believing a fallacy. Even now, we do believe many such fallacies; the foundations of our modern culture are fallacies.

When truth appears before us in simple manner with no complexities, we do not believe it as truth. However, if we believe, then we have redemption. The first man believed in a small thing and inherited sin. Your believing in a small thing that is true will cause miracles to happen in your life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,

that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I do hope sincerely that you will forsake your belief in fallacies and will not choose the path of destruction.

The intellects of humankind all put together can never save this universe. Any set up that does not have God in it ends up as failure. Let God open your eyes that you understand these truths.

In your letter, you have mentioned that in "my younger days", you were God fearing and were a true Christian. I do not understand what you mean by saying "my younger days." May be you were referring to those days before you went to college. You say that you lost your faith as you started thinking with 'reason.' I cannot believe that you were a Christian earlier. Once you are Christian, nothing can separate you from your faith. The joy a true Christian enjoys in his inner self is so enchanting that you do not get it elsewhere. I have been undergoing many troubles during the last few months. When others were sympathizing with me in my plight, you should have seen how much tranquil my face was and how joyous I was. Then you would have understood what a true Christian was.

You say that you feel sad seeing the poor men and women around you. Let me ask you, what are you doing for them? Are you empathizing with them? Have you done anything to address their sad plight? Can you be as low as them and suffer with them? On the other hand, are you just uttering Bolshevik slogans like 'capitalist exploitation', 'class war', 'labor class government' and the like for the sake of simply uttering something? You tell me now, what one has to do that a poor man is free from his sufferings. Have you ever expressed your love for those who suffer? Have you sacrificed anything for such people? Let me ask you one more thing; do you have even a trace of love in your heart for this poor men and women? May be your utterances are just to gain power of governance for your heartless and selfish middle class by making the poor instruments for your so called class war? Are you engaged in mere dramatics to exploit them for your ends? The wrath of God awaits people like you, the earless men immersed in cruelty. If you cannot repent and come

back to the love of God, please understand, God loves the poor more than you think about it. There is no socialist in this universe greater than Jesus Christ of Nazareth. If you deny him, you are embracing eternal hell.

Whatever I wanted to communicate to you, I have done. I love you. I cannot bear it that you move the wrong way in your life.

Let our Lord open your eyes that you see the truth. This is what I pray for you. Let Him lead you through green pastures and valleys of tranquility.

Yours in Christ

Paul Varghese

Lonan Pillai promptly replied to this letter and the response to him from Paul Varghese dispatched on June 23, 1949 is here below. This letter reflects the attitude he maintained during those days about Communism and Marxism:

My Dear Lonanpillai,

I was very glad to hear from You. It was a very interesting letter. I am very proud of you. The sentiments expressed there in are so noble.

You say that you did not see anything new in my letter. Well, I was not trying to teach you, but only trying to bring a few things to your remembrance. My arguments were baseless and groundless, you say. The point is that I did not argue in that last letter of mine. You want to take your own angle of view. I concede your right to do it. I will concede it to every young man who has a fundamental knowledge of men and things. But I do not concede your right to ignore other peoples' points of view. I am prepared to view things from your point of view. I am a student of Marx and Lenin. I know of a few things about communism and Marxism. I have not been initiated into your inner sancta, but yet I have a working knowledge of your ideals and methods. I see your view-point.

Now here is my challenge, little brother. I ask you to explain your faith. Are you prepared to see my point of view? Then answer the

following questions. I will tell you what I believe on the same topics and tell you why.

1. Do you believe in the existence of God, Personal or impersonal?

2. Do you believe in the personality of God? if not, why not?

3. What do you believe of the nature of God?

4. Do you believe that God controls and directs this universe?

5. What do you think about man? Is he endowed with the powers to acquire infinite knowledge by his own efforts. Is there a limit to the knowledge that a man can acquire? Who do you think was the man with the highest amount of knowledge?

6. What do you think about the origin of man? Was he created, or was he evolved from lower forms?

7. What do you believe about the origin of life on this universe? What do you believe on the origin of matter?

8. Do you believe in State Capitalism? Define your ideal society.

9. Define happiness. What do you want humanity to have, freedom from want, or happiness?

10. Do you think man should have freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, freedom of faith and worship, and above all freedom from fear and tyranny?

Please pardon for apparently trying to make you appear for an examination. I am a teacher (in fact, a college professor) and therefore love to ask questions and correct answers. Now if you can give me the answer to the above questions, I shall be able to know what your fundamental points of view are. Then we can agree on certain fundamentals and proceed with our mutual assistance to seek the truth. I donot say that I refuse to be convinced of the truth of your thinking. If you can convince me I am prepared to change my views. I am prepared to accept your angle of view and think with you. If you can show me that Soviet Communism is the way for the salvation of the world, the next letter will contain an application for mem-

bership in the communist party, and for contain an application for membership in the communist party, and for appointment as a worker. Hope you will not fail to send me the answers, clear and detailed, to the above questions. If you prefer to write in malayalam, I guess I can understand it. One of the chief reasons for my writing in English is the fact that I can type faster than I can write with pen. Hope you will excuse my using a bourgeoisie language. It happens to be the language of the world today.

Yes, you are old enough. But, take it from me, not old enough to judge for yourself. You are old enough to think for yourself. You do not need anyone to think for you any longer. But Just because you have read a number of books, do not think that you can judge everything. It is not mere reading that makes a man. Maturity of brain is one of the fundamental requisites. You are too young to acquire maturity of thought. It needs experience. You must go through pleasures and pains, hunger and satiety, richness and poverty, suffering and satisfaction, success and failure, health and disease, and all kinds of circumstances in life to be able to think clearly for yourself. I have gone through most, and in this 27 years of my age, have accumulated more experience than any man of 40. Excuse a little boasting. It is only my intellectual snobbery, which is extremely bourgeois too. Still, I am humble enough to admit that my thinking is not yet as clear as I would like it to be. When I read such a profound book as Das Kapital, or some of Lenin's writings, I have often to read a sentence three times before I can understand it. I agree in essence with Das Kapital. I agree that the capitalist is the greatest potential danger to any country. I agree to that the surplus value made by the capitalist out of the labour-power of other human beings, does not rightfully belong to him. But I do not agree with state capitalism. I am for state-controlled private enterprise. I know that today's state in the so-called democratic nations is all on the part of the moneybags, and is an enemy of the labourer. But state capitalism is not the solution, because without private enterprise, without individual effort, all the higher values of humanity are likely to perish. This is one of the facts overlooked by Marx, Engels and Lenin, for all three of whom I have the profoundest respect as great thinkers. Stalin, I do not care for. He is

just an ambitious monarch destined for ruin within three years. He is not sincere or faithful. There is a solution for this Capital Labour problem. lf you want my views on the subject, you can look into the Orient Illustrated Weekly of Nov. 16, 1947, where in you will find an article entitled The Human Approach to Labour Problems, by Paul Vergis. A better understanding between the Capitalist and the Labourer, the fixing of the use-value of labour not with relation to its exchange-value, but to its utility value and labour-power-value is what I advocate. That will be the solution to the problems of today. Perhaps you will remember that I was the Asst. Secretary of a Trade Union ***(of course bourgeois)*** and so I was very much interested in Labour Problems. I am still a labourer, and am on the side of lobour. So my views differ from yours only in respect of the methods used to solve the problem. You advocate a method which has been tried in a vast country, and proved such a failure that its owners are so ashamed of it that they dare not show it to visitors from outside. I advocate a method which I consider to be the best, because it is one which will not cost anything if it fails, and will be the best if it works. For that also a struggle is necessary, but not of the animal kind, not the butcher kind, not the destructive type. Well, we will continue our discussion about, methods later.

You will pardon a smile, When I hear you say that you were a Christian in your boyhood, and that you used to argue about it with your heathen friends. I tell you once again that if once you have become a Christian, It is physically impossible to be anything else. We would differ in our definitions of a Christian. You would say that any one who has been baptised is a Christian. Our church does not teach that. The Bible does not teach that. If at least a few of our Bishops and our Priests were Christians, sincere young men like you would not have left the Way of Life and follow the Cursed Path. What a corrupt and useless clergy we have! we cannot accuse the laymen for anything. All the fault lies on our clergy. The Lord says in the Bible, “Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion underfoot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.” That is what the pastors have done. Whether it be Catholic, Orthodox, or protestant, they have all gone the way of

the world, and forgotten the high priest, the Lord Jesus. If the Lord Jesus were to come to the world today. He would make our a whip, and use it in our priests, saying, "Get out hence; make not my Father's House a house of merchandise, or a den of thieves."

You have not had, a warm, loving, personal contact with the Lord Jesus. If you had, you would not have left him, to go with the prostitute Soviet Communism. If you think that the pleasures of heaven are the purpose of Christianity, then you are mistaken. Christianity is a way of life in this world, as well as for the world to come. You try to tell me that you tried to convince your heathen friends about Christianity, and that you were convinced by what they said to you. What a poor knowledge of Christianity you must have had! You are not Christian. Just because your parents are Christians. Christianity is not a family religion. It is a religion of the individual until you accept Christ as you personal Saviour, you are not a Christian. The Lord Jesus says, "Not every man that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father in Heaven." So you never were a Christian. You can be if you like to. The Grace of God is free. You are welcome to accept it.

So you reverted to Logic and book knowledge to find Truth. Very good. What are books? The storehouses of man's knowlegde. What is man's knowledge? The result of his experiments. What are his experiments? His successes and failures. Is it perfect? What does man know about a cold? Can he cure it? What does he know about electricity? He plays so much with it. It is his chief servant. But how does it pass through a piece of wire, or even through the air? He does'nt understand. He admits his limitations. Logic. What is Logic? The Science of finding out arguments to prove something about which you have already fixed some ideas in your mind. Is there anyone who has been able to detach himself completely from previously acquired knowledge, and take a cent percent deferential view of things. Practically impossible. All logic is a fallacy. I think it was Voltaire who listened to a heated argument in favour of the mechanical concept of life, and said, "I agree perfectly with you, but I agree perfectly with the opposite view also, because logic proves both." Logic is the most subtle science. It is full of the most delicate fallacies.

Human knowledge and Logic are the two most miserably fallible things on earth. Science is just classified knowledge. I am a student of Science and believe in most of what most scientists say.

But the fact remains that a person who devotes his whole time to the study of one or two sciences, will have the experience of the blind man who went to see the elephant. Each thought that what he felt was the whole elephant, whereas it was either the ear, or one leg, or the tusk, or the trunk or the tail alone that he really felt. If you are a communist, then you must have made a good study of Economics, because I am sure an intelligent boy like you will not jump into a party without a certain amount of study. The Science of Economics, is one of the most imperfect, and is full of problems that still remain unsolved. The difficulty lies in the general notion that money is all that there is in the world. The human heart, and the human soul are the greatest things in the world, and any economy which ignores these two is bound to be a failure in the long run. The Bolshevist economy has to destroy Conscience and Free thinking in order to exist, and hence cannot exist but under a ditatorship. That is why communism has to destroy religion.

If you want to have a comprehensive view of life, you must come to Philosophy, the Empress of the Sciences. There you dabble with Plato, and Aristotle, Socrates and Marcus Aurelius, Bacon and Spinoza, Voltaire and Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzche, and even Spencer and Bertrand Russel. There you come face to face with abstract Metaphysics, and begin to see that there is more in life than appears on the surface.There you try to go into the ultimate reality of life and existence and matter and space and time and eternity, and find yourself baffled everywhere. There you find the comprehensive view of all the sciences and laws, and bow down before the mighty ignorance of the human mind. When you have made a thorough study of philosophy, then you are prepared to begin your search of Truth. The elusive reality comes into Silhouette. There Philosophy ends and Religion begins. All your struggles through the years is amply rewarded by the vision that is in the horizon. You make that vision your aim in life, and life seems to be meaningful then. You find the great Plans of the Eternal Lawgiver being gradually unfolded, and you bow

down once again, this time before something worth the reverence. If you really want to see the truth, begin a study of philosophy. Study fearlessly, the Godless Nieteche, and the Agnostic Spinoza, and Voltaire the father of doubts. You would not come back very much enlightened about the ultimate realities, but still you get the most comprehensive view of human knowledge.

You have been telling me about the "Numerous evils it has presented to the present society." I would like to know what evils true Christianity has brought to the human society.

It is only change for the better that will improve things. Give me five evils out of the numerous, and I shall be satisfied. You state that if Religion is not cut out, It will ruin the whole society. Tell me how.

Do you accuse me of standing in the way of changes? I am for a root and branch change. I am not a day-dreamer to believe that the present set-up of society is the best. I am for change. But change will not improve matters. It is only change for the better that will improve things. What evils true Christianity, has brought to the human Society. It is only change for the better that will improve things. It is wonderful to hear from you, that "Our Holy Bible confirms that changes were the essential Characterisitics of human Society." You state as an example the statement that Noah thought of God as an avaricious eater, Moses as one who paid back evil-doers in their own coin, and christ as the embodiment of love. It looks exactly like the Devil quoting Scripture. Pray on what verses of the Bible do you base your first two assertions. My Bible says that God does not change. It says that God was kind to the Repentant Sinner in Mosaic times as well as in Christian times. It shows a God who is just and loving, merciful yet Mighty; It shows a God in whom there is no shadow of turning. God is not against the man who tries to ameliorate the conditions of the poor and needy. In fact that is one of the most important things that he wants his children to do.

2000 years ago, Christ was the Saviour of the poor. I agree with you. He still w is. If you think you are rich, then there is no need for you to go to him. But if you admit that you are not rich in the things that matter, then the best thing for you is to go to him and ask him for

his unperishable riches. Christ did not help the poor by giving them money or by killing the poor. He was wiser then you, and still is. The same feudal system existed in those days as it does now. It was only Industrial Capital that was absent at that time. But the Lord did not go shedding somebody's blood about for saving the poor. He shed His own blood for you and me. Accept that blood, if you want to realise the peace that passeth all understanding. If mass methods would have worked in those days, he would have used them. If they did not work then, they will not work now either.

By changing circumstances you will not be able to change the mind of the individual. The root of the evil is in the mind of the individual, and unless it is changed, all other change is futile. Many systems that tried to improve masses have failed miserable, for all these overlooked the fact that masses are made up of individuals.

You consider the work of some people to re-construct old-time religion as a crime. I plead guilty. I challenge you to punish me if you can. Do you want my blood? You are welcome to have it. I do not want yours. I want your heart. Can you give it to me? Can you love me? Can you love the Lord whom I Love? Then you will do more good to the world and to me, than you will by murdering all the capitalists and religious people in the world. You are not the first Nero. Christ's church is not afraid of people like you. Neros have come and Neros have gone, but Christ and His Bride stand for ever.

"I think that in a Christian world, there cannot be exploitation, prostitution, and theft" is what you say. True. But where is that Christian Society. Today's Society is a Communistic, or an Americo-Materialistic Society. It is full of thoroughly non-Christian Doctrines and isms.Tell me which is that Nation that you will call Christian. Comparatively, India is the most Christian Nation on earth, because the national character is so akin to the Christian. But if you take America or England, the so-called Christian Nations, they are all so absolutely Christless. It is unfair to put the blame for a depraved society on christ. The blame is to be laid at the door of those who reject christ, like you for example. If there was more of Christ in individual hearts, we would not have been living in the most putrified society of alltimes.

It is lack of Christ and not Christianity that is to blame. Give more of christ to humanity, and, is what Christianity wants today. But you choose to go the christless way. If there is prostitution, is it among the true Christians or among the Christless? If there is theft and murder, is it among the true Christians or the Christless? If there is commercial exploitation, if there is industrial exploitation, is it among the Christians or among the Christless servants of Mammon? No, communism is not the solution. Communism might succeed in bringing about economic equality, but it cannot bring about human welfare. Equality of opportunity, without the incentive for private enterprise, results in forced labour. And this in its turn brings about / evils many times greater in magnitude than the evils existent in the present-day economic build-up.

In an economic buildup which follows the communistic lines, the human being becomes a slave of the state. Man prizes his freedom above even food and clothing. Whether it to be man or state, I refuse to be slave. I was born free and I will remain free till I die. You cannot force me to live in a state where I cannot breathe, talk, air my opinions, or worship the God of my choice. I prefer to die rather than live in such suffocating atmosphere. I stand for equal opportunity for all; but not for the complete cutting down of Private Enterprise. I do not want to see any poor in my world. I want the state to take care of it that every body is free from want. The State would have to use force to take the surplus out of the Capitalists labour value productions. The surplus value produced by him will have to be taken away from him, but not completely, because he too must live and work. I hate a Capitalist Beaureaucracy as much as I hate an official Bureaucracy. The State however is apparently incapable of doing away with bureaucracy in one form of other. There cannot be peace without power and tyranny, in a communistic land. It is just impracticable. It tends to make man lose the finer and nobler values of life which make life worth living. Cruelty and Ruthlessness become the highest values and human life begins to descend to the level of the animal. I will sacrifice everything I have before I allow my country to go that way. An economy in which truth becomes a relative term, honesty becomes a weakness, and goodness the sign of frailty! I shudder to

think of that. No you can kill me before you establish that in my country. I will not live to see it.

Do you think that when poverty and inequality is removed by your method of destroying the existing structure and building up something brand new, in which everything will be shockingly stereotyped and equal, where everybody will get enough to satisfy his need irrespective of the "amount or quality of work he does where there will be no incentive to individual effort, and the only means to make human beings work is the one used of old by slave-drivers, that will be ideal society? Do you think that inequalities will not creep up? Do you think the plan of paying the major and the private in the army the same pay will work? Can Stalin receive the same remuneration as the street Scavenger? Can Malik or Vishinsky go and live in one of the third-rate hotels of New york as his poorer brother will be forced to do? Do you think that the Doctor of Medicine will care to go and treat a patient at dead of night, if his remuneration is fixed? Do you think the factory worker will put in his whole might into the job when he knows full well that what he is going to get is the same irrespective of the quality or quantity of the work he does? You plead for equal pay for man and woman. I agree, provided they do equal work. There is no reason why a woman telegraphist should be paid less than a man telegraphist. Yes your society of the future is a dream, as prone to be a failure as the present day society in Russia is a failure as far as the higher values of life are concerned.

Yes, the hearts of the rich are adamant. I do not doubt your wisdom in saying that. But if their hearts are adamant, remember they will die hard. Remember the Lord who says, Vengeance is mine. Do not think that God is unjust. He knows what each deserves. You may not be able to see the wisdom of his justice, because you have not studied the whole history of the case. He knows each man's heart, and will recompense reward according to the merit of each. If you try to punish them by killing them out, You will also perish by the same sword. I appreciate your crusading spirit. But how I wish it were led in the right path! It is not necessary that one generation should suffer so that the coming ones may be saved. You will not improve the world until you attack the root of evil. So long as men's

hearts are evil, new evils will always be ready to creep up. You are sowing the wind, and you and coming generation, if there is to be one, will reap the whirl wind. Let us learn to love, rny little brother, it is a loving heart that really conquers the world.

Let us not forget the fundamental fact that we are human beings. Mathematics does not apply to the human heart and soul. Any methods that rule out God will eventually fail. They have failed in the past. They are doomed to fail in the future. Let us love each other and see how fast it works. Let us learn to love, and to drive away every trace of hatred and malice out of our hearts. Then, brother, if you can accept the Lord Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour, you will know the peace that passeth all understanding. If the Lord blesses you, I will come over there in another year's time and then we will discuss these things in greater detail, and maybe the Lord might lead you to see the truth. Pray over it, if you can, and the Lord will bless you. If you want to see the Lord there is only one way, the way of Love and Faith. "I Love them that loveth me", sayeth the Lord, "and those that seek me early shall find me," Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him." What kind of seeking? Not the half-hearted type. "Ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Not with the brains, brother, but your heart. That is what the Lord wants. That is what he made you for. He wants you to love him. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy: break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness upon you. Ye have plowed wickedness ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men" (Hoseas10:12-13).

I advise you brother if you do not take offense at my advising you, that if you really care for the truth, read as much as you can of the Bible Study it with reverence, and you will find so much to enrich your soul. Not one single fact of the Bible has till this day been disproved by any of the Critics. If there is any point where you think the Bible gives an incongruous record, I am prepared to explain it to you. Try to study it in earnest, and you will not regret the day on which

you began the study. Christianity is an all-time religion. The Bible is an alltime book. Many have tried to attack the historical veracity of the Bible stories, and what is popularly known as Higher Criticism, was in vogue in the second half of the nineteenth century, and in the first two or three decades of the twentieth. But today, Archeology and Geology have vindicated almost every single truth in the Great Book. Not one single fact has been disproved by any critic. If you doubt this statement, I challenge you with my limited knowledge of the Bible and higher Criticism, to advance one single historical fact of the old or New Testament, that has been disproved. I am prepared to defend every one of them.

May the Lord bless you to realise these truths. Once again I say, let us love each other. Let our arguments not come in the way of our friendship. Let us remember that we are human beings. I have a very warm corner in my heart for you. I hope you reciprocate my feelings. Arguments have never convinced man. Man gets convinced first and then proceeds to argue with a view to justify his conviction. That is pure human psychology. So I am not expecting these arguments to convince you. But I believe in the power of prayer. I am praying for you, and the Lord will someday open your spiritual eyes to see the truth. I will keep praying for you. Meanwhile I will be delighted to hear from you in reply to the questions and the points raised in this letter. I like this discussion very much.

Coming to personal matters, I am keeping good health. I had a funny accident recently. I went out picnicing with a group of boy-scouts, and while trying to cross a water-course, slipped on a rock and fell into a water-fall. Of course the water-fall was only about 20 feet deep, but it was enough to kill me. Fortunately while I was being taken away by the swift water-current, and was just about to fall down with the waterfall; my right leg struck against a rock at the brink of the fall. So my course was stopped and while, I was regaining my balance and trying to swim, one of my courageous little boys, ran over and extended his feet for me to hold on. I held on to it, and climbed up the rock, in full tweed suit with hat on, and everything but the top of my hat wet. There was some money in my pocket and my watch also got badly soaked. My clothes were spoiled, but I myself

was safe.

I am beginning to like my new place. The boys are some of the highest educated children in the country, and it is a pleasure to teach them. I have a fairly big-sized house all for myself, and am enjoying my stay here. Please tell your mother and father that I am keeping good health, and give them my best compliments. Where is Ipekutty now? Has Pathappan finished his course? Give my best wishes to both. Where is Chechi now? I have'nt written to her sending her my congratulations on the new-born baby. Please congratulate Ipekutty also on my behalf. Has Saramma's marriage been postponed? When is your marriage? I hope I will be able to attend it or maybe, you don't care to marry. Are you a member of the party? Are you a worker? I am interested in knowing. What are your plans for the future? Are you going to be a worker, or are you going to pursue your studies?

Please write for all news. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Yours in Him.

Varghese attempted to author a book in Malayalam discussing the issues exchanged between him and Lonan Pillai through these letters. He has mentioned this to Lonan Pillai in his letter dated August 24, 1949:

"If I could talk with you face to face, I could very easily have shown you the way to see the nature of God. I am doing it in a Malayalam book which I am engaged in writing at the moment. I can only show you a few of the facts.

Look at the universe around you. Do you believe that the universe exists? You do. Good. Let me do the arguing for you, since you refuse to catch on. I will suppose that you ask certain questions, and I will answer them. Then again I will suppose that I ask you certain questions, and conjure up your answers. That would be interesting but remember it is copyright material, material that I am going to use in my book."

Varghese wrote part of his thoughts about these in a notebook for

about 51 pages, but due to various pre occupations, it seems, he could not complete it. During those days itself, Varghese could comprehend the non-authoritative and unrealistic interpretations of modern scientific innovations. He was trying to confront such interpretations and address those arguments in a proper perspective. We can understand the deep knowledge he has acquired in Science, Philosophy, Numerology and Logic then. Let us see the early part of this manuscript:

"I do not know whether God exists or not. Whether He is there or not, I do not have much interest in that."

This sentence is a quote from a letter from Christian youth having just completed his graduation from a university. This young man seems to be sincere, holding good moral values. His point of view many not be much different from many of the graduates of these days.

The preface of his letter is this: "By nature, I am habituated to do anything whatsoever in my emotional outbursts. I am not a person who looks into issues on both sides. Yet, I am proud of myself, I understand my weaknesses and trying to discard them as much as I can. May be this is a sort of false prestige. Nevertheless, this letter from me does not lack in sincerity." I believe what he has written. This young man is not one who forsakes God for the sake of personal comforts in life.

This young man continues, "I feel once in a while that it is man who created God. If we examine the history of humankind from the very early days, one can infer that gods have grown much from water, bear, leopard and proceeding further, through the stars ending at the present level. In other words, as the human brain grew up, gods too grew up."

Some readers may attribute an unnatural or crazy trait to this sort of arguments. However, it is not so. Some of the modern social establishments have perceived that faith in God stands in the way of their attempts to torpedo religion based organizations. To overcome this obstacle in implementing their agendas, such establishments spread certain propagandist theories in which many cultured youngsters have fallen and they resort to these thought processes.

In fact, it is too late for us to organize and coordinate programs to address these types of misunderstanding outlooks during the workshops or seminars or while similar exercises come up in our education systems aligning with the activities of religious or social organizations.

Nevertheless, I have strong doubts to the utility of schemes worked out based on our faith related customs or religious texts alone.

These young men raise unauthoritative and non-realistic analysis of modern scientific perceptions as their arguments. Those who love humanity must prepare themselves necessarily with ways and means to confront their propositions.

It would have by mid 19th century, statements and movements denying the existence of God originated seriously. Until then, people were looking around them and the universe watching the nature and they believed in the one who created them. Growth of vegetation and the intellect of humankind were proof sufficient to believe in the existence of God. However, today, arguments go to such an extent that it was this human intellect, which created God.

During early days, it was sufficient to believe that if there is a creation, there is a creator. The sayings today are that creations formulate creator in their imaginations and intellect. This ascetic proposition has its origin in the 'Theory of Origin of Species' put forward by Charles Darwin.

This 'great scientist' attempted to establish with his evidences that from a unicellular organism, man originated and grew up gradually to reach his present level or status. Evidence was 'fascinating.' It was 'fantastic.' Nevertheless, what he attempted to establish remain nothing more than a theory or proposition even now.

Let us undertake a parsing exercise on the Theory of Origin of Species that modern scientific methodologies attempt to propagate. This theory commences with a proposition that the sun was burning at a temperature of 12,000 degree Celsius and a much large sized planet passed through close to the burning sun at a terrific speed; consequently, one thousandth of the burning sun detached due to

force of gravity to remain circling in the space.

Because of the power of their momentum, these nebulas circled in space that was extremely cold and the larger nebulas attracted smaller ones to them ending up in the formation of our Solar System with nine planets.

Our earth is one among them. At a temperature of 12,000 degree Celsius, the elements within earth were in gaseous form. Oxygen and Hydrogen separately intermingled with metals and other materials in gaseous form and roamed about in space.

Gradually, the temperature decreased to 4,000 degree Celsius and Oxygen combined with Hydrogen to form water. This water too was in vaporized state due to the high temperature. As the heat kept on reducing, metals and other elements cooled down from vaporous state to liquid and then to solid; but water still remained vapor and settled above the surface of planet earth in cloudy forms. All those huge peepul trees and the like ones were large masses above earth like clouds and therefore, sunlight was not reaching the surface of earth. The planet earth was maintaining its high-level warmth even then.

The clouds those ascended to the sky were to fall down as rain, but the high warmth on the surface of earth vaporized the raindrops, which again ascended as vapor.

This went on for millions and millions of years and ultimately, earth cooled down. Clouds descended as thundershowers and a huge flood enveloped the earth. Gradually, sky turned clear and rays of sunlight made their entry to the surface of earth.

Even at this stage, the interiors of earth were highly warm. These cool thundershowers ending in flood, the high warmth in the interiors of earth and the unexpected entry of rays of sunlight to the surface of earth unified to end up in a fascinating miracle.

Suddenly, nobody knows from where, a living species took form by itself on the surface of this earth. It was a unicellular aquatic species. Readers may know about amoeba, a unicellular species and the main cause of spreading dysentery. One can see it as crystal point through a microscope. The living species that formed itself on

the cursed surface of earth after the withdrawal of clouds was something like this amoeba.

In the course of time, this unicellular species split into two, again split and the process went on to envelop the entire water body. From there, it grew up into plant life, water beings and animal beings in such a manner that only great scientists could comprehend this mysterious development.

Let it be like that.

The modern communities that do not believe in miracles, particularly those youngsters who are well educated, have no hesitation in accepting this Arabian Night time story, casting aspersions on the intellectual development of human species.

The intellectual level of ancient Egyptians who believed that human species took form from some insects seen in the mud settled around the mouth of River Nile appeared to be higher in comparison with the university students of the 20th century.

Darwin's Theory of Origin of Species blindly accepted by 19th century seems frozen by mid 20th century. However, it is pathetic that our university students of 20th century are content with 19th century standards.

Many of the readers would have gone through an article that appeared in the December 1946 issue of Readers Digest about the seven reasons a scientist had for his belief in God. The article was by Mr A C Morrison, who was the President of American Academy of Sciences. These are his seven reasons. ..."

As Varghese continued his manuscript, at one point, he says like this, proving the existence of God logically. "Intellect can sustain only aligned with an individual. If there is no individual, there is no intellect. Earth has no intellect. Neither the sun nor the space has. The one who owns this intellect is just not a power as envisaged by science; it is a wholesome person. We call this wholesome person, God.

Let us sum up what we have been discussing so far.

There is creation. There is no creation without a creator. Therefore,

we have a creator. Creation is not possible without intellect. There is no intellect without individual. Therefore, creator is an individual. We call this individual God. He is a person who creates everything; He is Omniscient and Omnipotent."

After this, Varghese exposes the hollowness of logic saying that logic cannot be accepted or believed. He shows with the help of logic that one can prove eight and eighteen are equal or one and three are same. Thus, he demonstrates the weaknesses of logic. In the opinion of Varghese, logic is one of the most dangerous of all sciences. In this eye-catching and inspiring manuscript, Varghese is providing answers to many issues raised by the young generation in very simple language.

The correspondence between Varghese and Lonan Pillai is continuing. In the reply Varghese gave on November 10, he has clarified his views on Christianity and priesthood. See that letter:

My Dear Lonanpillai,

I have been delaying replying your letter of the 18th septr with a special purpose. I was rather irritated at reading your letter, which I had no right to be, and so I thought I would wait until I could write in an unexcited vein. In fact I have no right to get offended at whatever you might say, since I had used some strong words in my previous letters. I apologise to you for having offended you and caused you to write such angry words.

I am beginning to think that this correspondence is not bringing us anywhere. Nobody ever convinced anybody by argument. And perhaps it is no use trying to argue with you. Even if it were, you are not prepared to argue logically. It might be more useful to both of us if we discuss our subjects with less emotion and more logic.

You tell me that you are not concerned at all about the existence of God. You think that even if there is a God, he will not punish you for your deeds so long as you do them with sincerity. I would like to know the source of your information. Did God speak to you about this? How do you know what God will do and what He will not do. It is presumptuous on our part to pre-judge the thoughts of God. God is

the Lord of this Universe, and He has a law. He wants you to obey those laws and does not ask you to do as you think best. If you want to know what the will of God is, you can read it in a book called the Bible, wherein the words of the Lord Jesus Christ are written so that you may see.

The main point is whether you have intelligence enough to see design behind this Universe. If you have and if you are prepared to think without the aid of western materialistic philosophies, you will see that man is a creation of God. You will also see that man is superior to all other living beings, in that he is able to choose between good and evil. If your intelligence is of the right type you can also see that there must be a purpose in this supreme creation. The Lord created everything else in the world for mankind and he made man with the special wish that man should of his own volition love God. God did not put any any compulsion on man whether to love God or to hate him, because He wanted spontaneous love from man. But man chose to hate God, and love himself more. Therefore man broke himself away from God. Anyone who cuts himself loose from the Eternal Source of Life is heir to death. So death came on Mankind.

God loved mankind yet. So he furnished a means by which it is possible for men to be reconciled to God. God is a just God. He must have disobedience punished. He must at the same time have mankind or part at least of it saved. S the Lord's plan was to take upon himself the punishment for the sin of mankind, and that explains the cross. Now the criterion for each individual appropriating for himself the benefits of this expiatory sacrifice was faith. It was faithlessness in God and faith in His enemy which made the first man disobey God and believe the snake. So every one who believes in the words of the Lord that, "He that believeth on me has eternal life", and compensated for the disobedience of the first man with his own obedience is redeemed by the death on calvary. This is the simple Gospel. If you believe it, you will find yourself becoming a new man and inheriting the peace that passes all understanding, which I now enjoy.

I want to comment upon some of your arguments. I am just showing you the other side. I do not expect you to swallow everything I

say. These are things which you do not usually find in books, because the world, and you along with them will consider it foolish. One of the first Universal truths, is that the majority is not essentially right. This is the fundamental flaw in democracy.

You have stated that the people in the days of old were barbarous, living a life akin to that of animals. What is your evildence for this statement? The fact is that man has deteriorated in his intelligence and culture. You will realise the truth of this if you compare the ancient civilisations of Greece, Egypt, China, or India with the civilisations existent in these countries today- Even the negroes of Africa had a very very advanced civilisation. The Babylonians, the Assyrians, the people of Knossos, were all in no way inferior to the people of today in intelligence. A man of the intellectual capacity of Socrates or Plato or Aristotle, or Euclid or Pythagoras or Bhaskara, has not been born in recent times. We have no evidence of any civilisation that existed before 5000 years and we know from the Bible that people believed in the true God even that early. There is no evidence in support of your theory that man began by worshipping water, fire, stars, sun, moon etc, or other natural phenomenon and then rose to the worship of God. All the evidence available points to the fact that the worship of God has been purer in the beginning in all religions and time has been a corrupting factor in the knowledge of God in all religions. You will realise that christ taught a religion that is devoid of all superstition, but later, Mary-worship and superstitions were brought in by priests who had no better way of squeezing money from the people.

Christianity is not a reasonable religion. The Mohamedans claim that theirs is reasonable natural religion. But Christianity is essentially supernatural in its concepts. It is the only religion that talks of a God reaching out to humanity. But your mind is cobwebbed with prejudices and it will be hard for you to see the truth until the sword of the Spirit strikes at your heart some day. The Lord will get you someday, and I am praying that day will be near enough.

You have tried to judge Christianity by the conduct of its professed adherents. You are forgetting that most of these are born into that religion and it is nothing of their own choice. Christianity is an

individual religion, and everybody has to make the choice for himself. You cannot call yourself a Christian since your choice has been the devil and this world and not christ. There are very few Christians in this world today, I am afraid less than a million, even though there are more then 850 millions professing that religion. Most Catholics are not Christians and so also with the Protestants and the Orthodox. Do not consider Pope as the representative of Christianity. He is the greatest known enemy of Christianity, greater even than Soviet Russia. So long as he forbids men to study the Bible for themselves, he is an enemy of Christ.

Since Christianity is not the result of any of man's experiments, you can be sure that is not going to vanish. Even in the hey-days of Communism in the World, you can find a few thousands who are faithful to their Lord.

It amuses me when I see you trying to assume superiority over me by saying you know Higher Differential Claculus. Brother, excuse this intellectual snobbery, but take it from me that I have an intellect that is at least five times as good as yours is. I can learn higher differential calculus without a teacher if I want to, just as I have studied Trigonometry and teach it to my boys now. Do no try to evade the issue by covering your ignorance. The theory of Evolution is one of the most fascinating studies for any intellectual, and any serious thinker must have some idea of it, before he can find any solution to economical problems.

You ask me again if I believe that the world was created in 4004 B.C. It is nowhere said in my Bible so, and I do not believe it. The earth may be 6 million or 10 billion years old for all I know, and I can wager you nobody knows better. But no scientist has yet proved that man has been on this earth for more than 6 or 7 thousand years.

You can understand Vivekananda, because he says something which you can twist to mean that you are also travelling towards God. Don't be under that wrong idea. You are headed towards perdition. No man realises God without seeking Him. If you want to escape, begin to seek Him while there is still time.

I am not planning to comment on some paragraphs of your letter,

because they are personal. The Lord will judge who has done more good to this world, I or you. He will also decide who loves the poor more, you or I.

My mind may not be open, but for me spiritual things come before the body's needs. In my conception, the spirit is eternal and the body is ephemeral, so I would care comparatively more for my soul than for my body. So with the bodies and spirits of others. I have eyes to see misery and poverty around me. Do not think that I am not touched by those things.

You consider the Economy of Communism as the only perfect economy. I say that it will be much more short-lived than Capitalism. Capitalism with its obvious flaws has held its own for many years, and is just about ready to give in in another century or so. But Communism as a world system will not even live for a decade, I am sure. The tyranny and the exploitation of those under authority by those in authority, will lead to sudden capitulation of the entire structure.

Nonviolence and violence are relative terms. There is no such thing as absolute non-violence. Non-violence has contributed to Indian Freedom more than any single factor, and it may or may not be a success in future. It depends upon the mentality of the people who use the weapon.

I am not an apologist of the present policy of the Govt. of lndia, and hence am not willing to defend them in their arrests of Socialist leaders.

To say that Christianity has not made any changes in the world is betraying ignorance. The civilisation of the world up to the middle of the 19th century had its foundations on some Christian principles, though there were many other, really larger in number, principles that were forgotten by the peoples of the world.

Christ's mission has not failed, because he did not come to change the world. He came to call a few individuals. He came to put the son against his father, the daughter against his mother and brother against his brother. He is calling a few even in these days. You can if you care to, accept his call today.

I have little else to tell you. I have told you what it is my duty in Christ to tell you. It is up to you to make the decision. The Lord is still beckoning to you. May He open your eyes to see the Light. I shall continue to pray for you.

You may reply to my opinions if you care to, but I am not, going to carry on this controversy any further. I shall be glad to let you have the last word.

Continue to write to me even if you do not discuss these things with me. I have a heart that loves you, otherwise I would not have wasted these words on you. Be a seeker. Do not trust books blindly. Be brave and faceissues.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May He open your heart and fill it with His Peace.

With Love,

Yours in His Service

P.S. Give enclosed letter to Chechi.

"The Emperor Haile Sellassie had also a palace right next to our college, where he occasionally spent short holidays. His eldest granddaughter, Princess Aida, lived there with her husband, Prince Mangesha Seyoum, the Governor of the District of which Ambo was the headquarters. I got to know the prince and the princess, and they also seemed to like me. They occasionally invited me for a meal."

"The atmosphere in the school was quite congenial; I got along with the students, who were all in their twenties. The teachers were also friendly and cooperative. All the students lived in hostels on campus. All were boys. Sometimes I would take a whole class out on weekend expeditions to the neighboring mountains."

"We had been told of a crater lake some 20 kilometers away, with an island in the middle, on which "savage" people lived, with their own language and customs. There was no road, but only a beaten track leading to the brink of the crater. Some of the boys were interested in a trip to this island, despite the dangers involved. We decided to go."

"We, a group of about 15, started early in the morning. I was given a mule to ride, since the boys thought I could not walk that far. I did walk part of the way. There was another mule carrying blankets and food. We were going to stay overnight, possibly in the open air. The adventure was quite promising."

"We had walked all day, and still there was no sign of the crater. I began getting a little anxious, because there was no time to go back and dusk was falling. I was wondering whether the lake and the island existed, or whether we had lost our way."

"Finally we arrived at the lip of the crater, but it was well past 8 p.m. We could see the lake way down below, and we could spot the island because of the dim light of oil lamps in huts on it. We started our descent into the crater. The water level was at least three kilometers below the edge of the crater, and the way down was steep and as far as we were concerned, pathless, but full of tall trees."

"We had gone down a third of the way, when we stopped and reflected. It was fairly dark, and we could not see whether there were any boats down below that would take us across to the island, if at all we managed our descent to the water level. And if the people were as savage as they were reputed to be, why take the risk of an encounter at nighttime? So we decided to strike camp, but there was no level ground anywhere. It was a steep 70 degree incline, and I had found it difficult even to walk down in the dark."

"Each one covered himself in a blanket and slept on the slope, some using stones as pillows, with at least two trees next to each to stop us from rolling down. There was no moonlight. The skies were overcast, I remember. I think we slept well, despite our anxiety about the morrow; we were all quite tired and the night was cold."

"As day was dawning, we could see that a boat from the island had landed on our side of the crater. A group of people with kerosene lamps in their hands were wending their way up. We walked down to meet them halfway. Their leader, a senior person, spoke good Amharic, and asked us: "What have you done to us? Why do you come at night and stay in this dangerous jungle, full of hyenas and other wild animals?

If something had happened to you, would we not have been blamed for not looking after you?" It was all said with such friendliness and cordiality that I felt ashamed."

Varghese apologized profusely on behalf of my party. But he continued in that same reproving but affectionate tone: "Did you think we were wild animals or demons? You could have come down and we would have found places for you to sleep in our humble homes. Come now, and have something to eat with us."

"We went down with them and ferried to the island, where a big party had gathered to welcome us. We were ushered in to a fairly commodious round thatched hut with mud floor, which must have been their community center. We were all given seats on the floor, and some *Tella* or fermented barley beer to drink. We told them where we were from, and they told us all about themselves. They did not eat any meat, though they had cattle. They lived on grains and fish, if I remember right. All of them looked rustically healthy, cheerful and bright. Their women and children were full of curiosity to see these strange visitors from the outside world."

"They were preparing a big feast for us. All of a sudden we were told that the governor of the district, Prince Mangesha Seyoum was going to join us soon. He had come by a different route and had arrived near the crater in a Jeep, doing the journey in less than three hours. This was the first visit of the Governor to this island, and the local people made a big event of it, with dancing and feasting, but without meat. The Prince told me that I could have come with him in his Jeep, if only he knew I wanted to come. Anyway we had a great and joyous feast, with barley pancakes and spicy side dishes, but no meat."

"The important point is that these isolated island people, without any social contact with the Amhara people of the land, were far from savage or wild. They were dignified, refined and courteous as well as hospitable. I told my boys that they should not always believe stories they hear about other people. I began to shed some of my own inherited prejudices about the alleged "savagery" of "primitive" peoples. People may not know how to read or write, but still be civilized

in the sense of being spontaneously and warmly human."

Varghese became a favorite to the students because of his Bible classes, adventurous outings and affectionate dealings.

It was a beautiful day and there were news that Emperor Haile Sellassie had come to his palace at Ambo to enjoy his holidays. He decided to pay a visit to the college. Therefore, Varghese and his students decided to present a programme in honor of the Emperor. In a short time, they scripted a skit in Amharic language. They prepared and did the rehearsal well. In addition, they also decided to play some English dramatic sequences under the initiative of Varghese. They chose the play 'Julius Caesar' of Shakespeare and identified the scenes of the assassination of Caesar and the well-known obsequy oration of Mark Antony for presenting on the stage. As the students were not proficient in English to by heart the lengthy oration, Varghese volunteered to take the role of Mark Antony.

Presentation of the drama was of high quality. Emperor Haile Sellassie seemed to have enjoyed it. Apart from taking the role of Mark Antony, the other skits and dramas had a touch of Paul Varghese, as he was the one who directed them. Towards the end of all these presentations, Varghese delivered a short speech in Amharic. He expressed profound thanks to the Emperor and Empress for honoring the College by their visit.

After this brief talk as expression of thanks, the Emperor gestured Varghese to come to him and asked, "From where did you learn Amharic?" In flawless Amharic, he replied, "In this country itself, Your Majesty."

"You mean here? How long you are here in this country?"

"An year and a few months, Your Majesty."

"Is it only a year and a few months? There are many Armenians staying here for forty years and they are not speaking Amharic as you do!" He smiled pleasantly.

Varghese felt very content and proud. The Emperor continued in Amharic, "Neither have I heard about this Julius Caesar nor have

seen that drama on stage. Can you send me a copy tonight that I can read it?" Varghese consented and send His Majesty a copy.

"Only in later years I realized how the murder of a Caesar or Emperor was fascinating to him, since he was himself, like Julius Caesar, in constant danger of being killed by his internal enemies or by aspirants to his throne. Haile Sellassie's spoken English was not quite up to the mark, but he followed the Mark Antony oration with avid interest. He had been trained by French and French Canadian Jesuits in his childhood, and spoke French more fluently than English. But he had learned to listen to and understand English during the time of his long exile in Britain. He had lived with his family, in Bath, England, for several years during Mussolini's occupation of Ethiopia."

"For me this encounter with one of my childhood heroes was a moving experience. I had seen so little of the world, and this recognition by the Emperor was a great thing for my natural vanity. I praised and thanked God for the radical change in my public image, from what it had come to be in Jimma. Strange indeed are the ways of God. But what soon followed was an even greater surprise."

In the third week of December 1948, Varghese received a strange looking order from the Ministry of Education. This was a transfer order for him from Ambo to the Haile Sellassie Secondary School at Addis Ababa, the most important educational institute in the country those days. The appointment was as the senior Amharic Teacher. The order had specifically mentioned that this was as desired by the Emperor. Varghese was in confusion; certainly, he had an option to back out. However, Varghese decided to confront the new situation fearlessly.

"I could read and write, as well as speak Amharic, but I had no scientific knowledge of the language whatsoever. All I had was the few lessons given to me in Nazareth by my fellow teacher Ato Telahun Damte. There were not many books available for me to read. I got hold of the only available Amharic Grammar book by CH Armbruster, and went through it once. It was a thick tome and I found the approach much too academic for young Ethiopian students. So I decided to write a new Amharic Grammar of my own, in a high school notebook.

That took the whole of the Christmas holidays."

"I went and joined the prestigious Haile Sellassie I Secondary School in Kotabe, on a beautiful hill, just outside of Addis Ababa. Most of the students were boarders, from the upper crust of society, the pick of Ethiopia's total student population. Special quarters were provided for me in one of the hostels. The Director of the School, by that time, was none other than Dr. Robert N Thompson, the man who had recruited me in India less than two years ago, and later helped me with the appeal to the Emperor in the Jimma case."

University education had not commenced in Ethiopia then. There were two more highly rated secondary schools at that time. They were the General Wingate School under British management and the Tafari Makonan School managed by French Jesuits. Haile Selassie Secondary School where Varghese got his posting had its functioning mostly under Canadians and this had its performance ranked better than the other two. The Amharic teachers of those schools were, one an English man and the other a French, learnt Amharic and related local languages for many years to become authoritative scholars. Yet, their pronunciations were not perfect. On the other hand, Varghese excelled them in the right way of pronunciation as well as in his oratory styles.

"I was to teach in the 11th and 12th grades. I had an assistant, a venerable traditional Ethiopian scholar-priest, Kanhgeta Hailegiorgis, a well-known literary writer in Ethiopia. He was most Friendly and helpful, and did not show any signs of resentment about a young foreigner being placed above him. I did not have a tenth of his Knowledge and command of Amharic. When I had a doubt in Amharic, I consulted him. If he could not help I could always go to the Minister of Justice, Ato Marsae Hazan, who had by that time written a book on Amharic grammar. He became a good friend."

Varghese followed his policy of interacting with students in exactly the same manner as he did at Ambo. On his very first class, he told the students, 'this is a language you have been learning from your infancy. You would have learnt this language ten or eleven years in schools. On the other hand, I am a foreigner who is learning this

language taking great efforts. More than what you learn from me, I may be able to understand from you.' Thus, Varghese shared his being a novice in Amharic. The students responded positively to this truthfulness.

For a certain period, all the ministers in Ethiopia were those who passed out of this school. It was just sufficient to be minister if he passed High School. One of the students of Varghese studied Law and later became the Chief Justice of Ethiopia.

All these three secondary school were conducting examinations of London University. The examination held at the end of first year since Varghese took over, his students performed far better than the other two schools did and they broke the previous record of Amharic examinations of London University. Naturally, Varghese was very proud at this achievement, but he did not credit it to his quality of teaching; he held the view that they could achieve such a creditable performance because the students worked with commitment and sincerity showing utmost interest.

That school was a favorite of the Emperor. He used to visit this school almost every month. The future of Ethiopia seemed to depend on this school. Quite often, the Emperor came to the school with truckload of sweets and fruits. These were for distributing among the students. Occasionally, he used to summon Varghese to the Office of the Director to hear him talking in Amharic.

The Educational Department of Ethiopia appointed a subcommittee to work out a draft curriculum to teach the language Amharic in classes seven and eight; they appointed Paul Varghese as Chairman of this Amharic Elementary Education Curriculum Committee. Ato Likyelhbat, teacher at Menelik Secondary School and Ato Dejena, teacher at Teachers' Training School at Addis Ababa were the members of this committee. This committee was to meet once or twice before April 24, 1950 and submit the progress of their work on April 24 at the Ministry of Education Board Room as directed in the order of appointment. The committee after meeting twice at the Menelik Secondary School submitted their report of April 24. Apart from suggesting the textbooks for these two classes, the committee

proposed a few recommendations also. The committee said that there must be five periods for teaching Amharic in both these classes. Moreover, there should be another period for translation exercises from Amharic to English and vice versa. They further recommended that those who teach Amharic must be graduates from Teachers' Training School.

During these days, Varghese tried to be closer to God and to work for God. A letter to his friend Kunjoonj on November 26 has disclosed many of his thoughts of this time as shown below:

My Dear Kunjoonj,

Thanks very much for your postoard. It was nice to know that you are keeping alive.

Laziness is man's a greatest enemy. It is besetting me in this country, because everybody here is dormant and lazy. But you there, with all the intellectual stimulus that you desire, have no apology for laziness. You must be able to find time once in two or three months to write a few pages to someone who appreciates those pages, and who is most anxious to hear about you. I cannot see why you fail to

write to me.

Your P.C. almost scared me. When I saw the heading, "The Last Journey", I could not make out why your thoughts should be about that first. Yes, Tagore was a man who had a glimpse of the Eternal, what many call the Great Unknown, but what I call the Great knowable. I have also had a glimpse of the Truth and my life has been transformed by that vision. I am an ardent seeker of Truth today, and I look for it, not in books, not in the writings and speeches of great men, not in the wisdom of the world, but in everyday life around me, right inside my own heart, within the circumference of my own experience. It does not make me fatalistic. It gives me a new power, a new courage, new views and visions, and a new faith with which to go on. I fall often, but I get up and push forward towards my Goal. In my case the Great Experience which drew me towards the Truth and gave me a glimpse of It, was a contact sweet in its freshness, with the Lord Jesus Christ. Others might have approached the same Goal through other sources.

I have been reading Krishnamurti's book, "Life in Freedom", wherein he says, "Truth is greater than every book of every religion, greater than every belief you hold dear." It is so true. When we want to circumscribe Truth with our own petty beliefs and dogmas, Truth becomes elusive. That is why most religions fail in their purpose.

Jesus Christ has provided one of the easiest methods of approach to God, and realisation of Him. There may be methods of Yoga and Tapas. Methods of Renunciation or Meditation, but for me the method of Jesus seems the easiest. His words, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lonely in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my Yoke is easy and my burden is light" have an irresistible attraction for me. I am a very poor disciple of His today, but I am conscious of the fact that every day, I am striving to serve Him better. A day may come, and that very soon, when He willing, I will be able to take up my cross and follow Him. It may be two years, it may be more, but I must do it. I have promised my all to Him, and I do not intend keeping anything back.

I was brought here by the Lord with a purpose. I realise that only

now. I have been asking the Lord for many years that I may be taken away from among my friends that I may be able to view life with a pair of fresh unprejudiced eyes. I have been given what I asked and I have been blessed with the Vision that I wanted. But I am still not acting up to what I am conscious of as my duty to God. It is a huge task that waits me in this world. It requires a great struggle within myself, and a good great deal of sacrifice. Yet I am not afraid of it. The struggle has already begun, and the sacrifice will soon be made. If I can get rid of my pride and my vanity. I will very soon be ready to begin my work. I hope the Lord prepares me and leads me to my duty.

I have no problems in Life. I see the meaning of Life, and the only ideal that I now have is that others may know it too. It is hard to convince anyone, because it is too simple for the sophisticated twentyth-century brain. It is the simple purpose of a human father begetting children, so that he may love them and be loved by them. The human parent may have many other reasons for begetting offspring. But the Heavenly Father - and Mother - in - One has only one purpose, to love and to be loved by.

If we realise this, if we can underst and that we have been created so that we may love Him, and be loved by Him, life is no longer a mystery. You understand the Greater Life of which our terrestrial life is but a microscopic segment, as the source of all life, and also we see our earthly life as a probationary period when we can choose whether we want to Love God or love Mammon. If men can see that this few years that they have here, the uncertainty of life, the stealthiness of death, even the lusts of the flesh are all integral parts of His Divine Plan for us, whereby we may show Him that we would prefer Him to everything else, then they would not try to compromise religion with a life of greed and hate. What kind of a religion do we see all around us? Either it tends to ecclestiacism whereby men are blinded to the truth, or to Roman Catholicism whereby men worship idols rather than God, or even to the Reformed Evangelical movement, in which there is a strong inclination of compromise money and God, even though most other forms of sin are ruled out.

We need a new type of Christianity, the Christianity that has the burning ascetic zeal of the first century an uncompromising torrential soul-pervading love for God and His will, a willingness to consider the world as a strange city and ourselves as pilgrims, to stand and suffer, mockery, ridicule and persecution. We need to rethin Christ and His Cross, and gain our victories through His Cross.

But what am I really doing about it? Very little, I should say. I am preaching and teaching a group of boys to grow up as children of God, but very often I find myself unable to carry out the precepts that I ask them to observe. My own life is but a poor example of the Life of Christ, Yet I am trying to live the Christ-life as much as lieth in my power. I am aware of the fact that the amount of power that I possess at the moment is quite limited. But my soul panteth after Him, and I am definite that He will rain His Grace on me, and I will be able to climb towards Him. The struggle in my sinful flesh is most terrific. I succumb very often to it, but then there are continuous periods, When I do live a comparatively pure life. There are moments when the flesh gets the better of my spirit, and I get angry of I fall into impure thoughts and sometimes unclean actions. But most of the time I keep a heart free of all hate, full of love for everyone around me at times it kindless a fire in the hearts of some of these dear children around me. Some day or other many of them might come to see the Vision that I have seen and strive to follow it.

The Lord hath been merciful unto His Servant by using Him to bring back some of the wildest of these boys to Christ in a most miraculous fashion. It takes a lot of suffering on my part, but it is a suffering which is in itself a great glory. O, how I wish I could continue to be persecuted as I was in Jimma! How happy I was to suffer shame for the Name of Christ!

Brother dear, if you do pray, forget not to make daily prayers for this weak servant of His. Pray that he may get the victory over all his little weaknesses, pray that he would become a man of prayer, pray that he would be used mightily of God for the glory of His Kingdom. Yes, I need all the prayer that you can pray for me. I need clouds of prayer to go up into His Presence on my behalf. Do share in this ministry of mine by prayer.

Tell me more about your new life. It is hypocritic to say that you have no time. No one works so hard as I do. And I have scores of letters to reply. I find time for all that. It is possible for you too. Do try and write to me in detail. You do not understand how much I appreciate your letter's. Don't you know that you are one of the few persons in this world who understand me? I feel so lonesome, and there is no greater pleasure than to hear from brothers like you.

You are still sleeping, still dreaming. New responsibilities, new outlooks, have only made you less of a thinker. You got to rise up, and see what you can do. There is a lot than you can, if only you will think. It is hard to change yourself without changing your circumstances. I have tried it and failed. I could not change myself until I changed my circumstances. But it is possible. If you try, you can become a different man, and can serve God better. Remember that every child of God is a cell of leaven, you are expected to leaven the whole lump. Exert your influence on those around you, to win them for Christ. You cannot do it in your own power, but you will have to acquire a daily supply of His Power by hours of Prayer. May the Lord bless you by leading you to get closer to Him, and to know peace by fearlessly confidently abiding in him.

How is your Madam? My respectful and affectionate regards to her. Does she understand you? I wish she does.

Do find some time to write to me in detail.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May He give you abundantly of His Grace. May His Name be glorified through our lives.

with Seasonal Greetings, Love and Prayers.,

Yours in his Service,

Inner faculties of Varghese thirsted for new openings of knowledge like the thirsty and dried up earth seeking for water. This thirst of his spirit was too strong like the earth awaiting new drops of water shed by the sprouts of new life.

"It was at this time that I started regular private study classes in the Bible. Many students came, voluntarily. I was only a layman. So

I got one of the monk-priests in town to help me, and to lead liturgical worship services. His name was Abba Habtemariam, a very intelligent and devoted priest. Later, during my second sojourn in Ethiopia, I was able to present him to the Emperor and he became famous as the Rector of the Emperor's Trinity Cathedral, then the largest church in Ethiopia."

"Together with Abba Habtemariam, we ran religious programs, without contradicting or opposing the traditional practices of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Jimma episode was by this time well behind us, and no one would stop me from taking these Bible study classes. It was during these private study classes that I realized how abysmal my ignorance of the Bible and other religious matters were. I decided to correspond with some Protestant Christian institutions in America about going to College there and pursuing theological studies either simultaneously, or after graduating from College. It was always the more conservative Fundamentalist Bible schools that offered me scholarships in America, and I was not very happy. Then one day again the way of God opened up."

One day, Varghese was travelling in a train destined for Debre Zeit (Bishoftu). He was heading for a centre suitable for relaxing at the weekend. However, there would have been some prudential plan behind this journey as it turned out later. Some of the American Mennonite missionaries whom Varghese had acquainted with earlier at Nazareth were also travelling in the same compartment. They were happy to have met their good old friend 'Mr George' unexpectedly like this. There was another person with them whom Varghese had not seen before. They introduced him to Varghese. He was Auri O Miller, Secretary of American Mennonite Central Committee. He was the Supreme Head of the relief activities of Mennonites the world across. Now he was on a visit to various mission centers in Ethiopia. He had heard about the Jimma experience of Varghese and his adventure with Amharic language. He evinced interest in knowing the plans Varghese had in mind, who disclosed his dream of moving to America for further studies. He also expressed his anxiety whether he would be admitted in any good Theological College since he had no graduation.

Miller said, "A degree is essential if you want to do further theological study. My brother Ernest Miller, who was formerly a missionary in India, is now President of Goshen College. I am sure he can find a place for you, and Goshen is a good college, located in Indiana, not far from Chicago. Give me all the details, and let me work it out for you."

He did what he could do. Varghese forwarded all necessary papers and made sure his admission at Goshen. They agreed to provide him a scholarship to cover all his expenses there except cost of travel. Varghese had enough savings with him to fund his ticket charges.

By 1950 June, with the end of that academic year, the three year contract signed with the Government of Ethiopia was being completed. As Varghese reached Ethiopia by November 1947, it was only two years and seven months since he was there. Varghese received a letter by this time from the Ministry of Education requesting him to renew the contract for a further three-year period. As he had clarified before the Director General during the Jimma incident, Varghese politely replied to the Ministry that he did not intend to continue even a single day after satisfaction of the current period of contact. He pointed out that he was planning to go abroad for continuing his studies.

"I remember one day particularly, just before the close of the school year, when examinations were over. We were having the National Annual Sports Day in our school grounds. All sports teams in the country were coming to our school: the army, the air force, the Imperial Bodyguard, the police, and other schools. The Imperial Majesties were the Chief Guests. All the senior Government officials and the Diplomatic Corps were present."

Varghese had the responsibility to announce the important events and the results thereof through a public address system. He did it well in English and Amharic. The people of all categories who assembled there would have appreciated the work done by Varghese. Those were days, when many were not there, who could narrate sports related matters flawlessly in English and Amharic simultaneously. Those who could talk in English fluently would not have purity of pronunciations in Amharic. Some of the audience,

particularly the important dignitaries were passing comments about the announcer. Some among them mentioned the adventurous stories related to Varghese. In short, the day was one of real success for Varghese. May be, he was earning name as a well-known person in the country as well as even an epic.

"After the sports event was over, the Emperor and Empress decided to give their family a conducted tour of the school of which they were very proud. It was a large family indeed: Crown prince Asfau Wossen, the eldest son; Princess Tenagneworq, the only surviving daughter; Prince Makonnen, regarded by people as his favorite son; the wives of the two princes; half a dozen or more grandchildren; Prince Sahle Sellassie, the youngest son, a bachelor. The Emperor was walking in front. He called me to his side, and was talking to me in Amharic, still walking."

"We have heard that you are leaving our country", said the Emperor to Varghese. "Why?"

"Oh, I would like to study further, Your Majesty."

"What are you going to study?"

"I would like to study Theology, Your Majesty."

"Where would you study theology?"

"In America, Your Majesty. I have a scholarship."

"Theology in America? Do they teach it there?"

"Yes, Your majesty. I have first to get a college degree."

"You do not need to study any theology. You know enough now. You stay here and work with me. We need you in the Palace."

"I have a scholarship and have already bought my ticket, Your Majesty", Varghese said, quite foolishly.

"That is not a big problem. You stay here. We want you on our personal staff."

"I was hesitating about what to say, but sensing that I was about to refuse, he soon added: "Don't say anything now. We will talk to

the Crown Prince, and you can discuss the matter with him." The Crown Prince was walking just behind, listening to the conversation. The Emperor called his son and said something to him. I withdrew, and did not listen. The Crown Prince then came and said to me, "I want to talk to you. Can you come for breakfast at my palace tomorrow morning at eight?"

Next day morning, Varghese reported at the palace of prince, next in line to the throne. This palace was just outside the palace of Emperor that was under tight protection. The reception was quote cordial and pleasing. Breakfast was sumptuous. The prince told Varghese that his father had asked him to persuade Varghese to continue in Ethiopia. He can demand any salary. He would not be in teaching line, but would be in the Imperial staff. The prince openly told Varghese that the Emperor liked him. He needed trustworthy personnel with him. The prince wound up his task advising Varghese to accept this offer without raising further questions.

"With some sense of embarrassment, but quite clearly I told the Prince that my vocation was essentially religious, and since I was already 28, and had no College education, this was the time to get some education. I affirmed my great love for the Ethiopian people and my very high respect and affection for the person of the Emperor. I was deeply touched by the Emperor's affection for me and his confidence in me, but I had to go, I told him, because this was a call from God. Prince Asfau Wossen seemed to be deeply moved; he told me that he had never met anyone like me who would refuse such an offer from the Emperor. He said he respected my decision and would communicate the same to his father."

Nevertheless, the pressure tactics did not end there. Abuna Theophilose was the Arch Bishop of Haarar, residing in Addis Ababa. He was a powerful personality and summoned Varghese. He was a person very close to the Emperor. Even Varghese knew him closely. He was a great scholar in Ethiopian traditions. He was also the superior of Emperor's Holy Trinity Cathedral.

Varghese was to meet him at his Metropolitan Residence. He used a different approach, the tactic of goading. In a belittling tone,

yet covered in love and with no touch of religious polarity, he said, "you are an Indian; Indians are infamous for their thanklessness." He was attempting to provoke Varghese. He knew everything about the Jimma episode and all other incidents related with Varghese. In reality, he liked Varghese a lot. Varghese used to be in touch with him by intermittent visits. Varghese boldly reminded him some of his experiences at Jimma and raised a pertinent question. "Now, who are thankless? Indians are thankless or Ethiopians?"

"You are raising all these stories now as you are arrogant. Those were your ways and means to understand us. Now you have become one among us."

"Abuna Theophilos, still using the mocking and scolding technique, went on to tell me a parable. This was the story of a hen which had laid some eggs, and was hatching them. By some accident, a duck's egg had come into the batch she hatched. Only when the chicks came out, the mother hen noticed that one was a duckling. She brought it up with her chicks, but when the duckling grew wings, it left the brood of chicken and flew away. The moral of the story was that I was the ungrateful duckling which had been hatched by the Ethiopian mother hen, and was now flying away."

"The Archbishop told me I was a fool and did not know how to make the right decisions. I politely countered that I was indeed a fool, and that was why I could not change my decision to leave Ethiopia for the time being. For me, this was a period when I prayed intensely and for long hours, and my conviction about the call from God was unshakable."

"Even that was by no means the end. So many people, Ethiopians as well as Indians and Canadians, whether prompted by the Emperor or not, tried to dissuade me from the decision I had made. One of the last attempts had a touch of humor to it. I have already referred to Blatta Marsae Hazan, the Minister of Justice, the great expert on Amharic, who was also very fond of me. He invited me to his home one day. After the initial courtesies and embraces, we sat down on a couch, and he told me quite directly that the Emperor had asked him to talk to me. With paternal affection he told me that my decision to

leave Ethiopia was immature and mistaken, He had two proposals to make. The first was official. As Minister of Justice, he was to confer upon me Ethiopian citizenship. The second was personal. I should marry an Ethiopian girl and settle down in Ethiopia for life. He then told me he had a grown up daughter, who was a secondary school student. She was not at home, but was in boarding school. He produced her photograph and showed it to me. "She is intelligent and good-looking, of fine character", he told me. He then went on to produce some of her notebooks from school and showed them to me."

"Needless to say, I was embarrassed, even a bit confused. It was not polite to say a downright no to both proposals. I barely wiggled out of the situation by saying something about my not wishing to marry until I had finished my education and so on. He still insisted on my accepting Ethiopian citizenship. I said could not consider it now, since I was leaving the country in a few days. That was the end of what was for me a very difficult conversation."

Varghese was sad that he could not pursue higher education after SSLC. Therefore, he had been thinking about moving out to America or England for higher studies while he was working with Ambo Agricultural College. Even he had made certain enquiries in this matter.

On 15 September 1949, Varghese dispatched a letter to Bustern L Godard who was Dean at Boston Golden College in America. Expressing his desire to study at that college, Varghese wrote, "I am engaged in some gospel work in this country. God has blessed me in this mission. I have submitted my life to God. Once I finish my studies at Golden College, I believe, God would call me as a full time Evangelist. I do have financial problems. However, I depend fully in God for all my needs."

Varghese wrote a letter to Mookencheril Petros Ramban (later, Pathrose Mar Osthathiose) on 24 October 1949 where he shared his plans: "I am thankful to for your pieces of advice regarding my plans to pursue studies in America. One objection you have raised is that those who undertake studies abroad return home with western ideologies. This may be true in many cases, as I also know. My intention for going to America is to study the ways and means to do

gospel work in this world. Tough and hard training is helpful for that. Understanding this world deeply would help do gospel work better.

I am not going to a community that leads a luxurious life. The community I wish to be part of has more than a thousand men and women living together. They work together, cook their food and they wash their dishes and their clothes all by themselves. They help mutually in everything. This learning centre is not located in a town or even close to one. Therefore, chances of westernization seem to be minimal. My plan to join Prairie Bible Institute is a Divine Call, as I perceive.

You have suggested Bishops' College, Calcutta for my higher studies, but I do not know anything about that Institute. What would be the minimum qualification for admission? What would be the total cost for finishing the program? There are opportunities at the place where I intent to go now to raise funds to meet expenses for my studies. Do we have any such possibilities at Bishops' College?"

I request you to kindly pray for my works here. I do experience blessings from the Almighty in what I do here now. In addition, this has been giving me some inputs or wisdom about our true God."

In July 1950, Paul Varghese boarded flight to America, leaving Ethiopia. Before joining Goshen College, he paid visits to Middle East and Europe as a tourist.

The Emperor and many others in Ethiopia were sad that Paul Varghese left them. One of the students, Sentayehou Yaghellou, of Haile Sellassie Secondary School at Addis Ababa wrote to Varghese on 2 August 1950, "You left us on a Saturday and therefore an illogical thought is hovering around me that all Saturdays are bad. I feel, I am an orphan in a vast world where my mother is no more. My thoughts are getting scattered. One who separates from a good friend may have these sorts of feelings. However, my sorrow is inexplicable."

"I joined Goshen College in America for my higher studies. Though small in size and all, the College maintained high ideals. College had a good spiritual atmosphere. I learned Philosophy, Language and Biblical Language there. This was part of General Education and

they had a system within that called 'Major.' Accordingly, more topics come up in an area. These topics were Philosophy and Language. In between during summer, I learned Linguistics at Oklahoma University. Greek and Hebrew were the languages I learned at Goshen."

Paul Varghese was far knowledgeable than his co students at Goshen. The Professors there suggested to him that by hard work, he could complete the courses earlier that the normal schedule. Thus, he succeeded in completing the course in two years that would have otherwise taken four years.

"America does not have the system of Universities. Each institute confers their own degrees. To earn graduation from Goshen College, you have to have scored 120 credits. Normally, they allow only 30 credits a year. I studied a variety of courses and secured grade A in all. They acknowledged me as their best student and everyone there treated me nicely. Professors were proud of me. Nevertheless, I have never accepted in my life whatever Theology I learned from America. I could acquire many insights there to learn Bible. I could learn the languages Greek and Hebrew from Goshen. Their Theology was not to my liking then, and even now, I do not accept it."

"Those days, I used to study Bible of my own; I could not appreciate whatever they taught on Bible in our regular classes. I learned many things of my own and taught those to others. I could serve as a Pastor for four years in the parishes of Baptists who were black, located in Elkhart of Indiana and Princeton of New Jersey. I consider this as a valuable experience in my life as an Eastern Orthodox layman."

Claude U. Broke was the senior Pastor at St John the Baptist parish of North Carolina. He recalls about Varghese:

"...We met at a summer session at Union Seminary in New York.

We developed at that time a very cordial and warm relationship and I invited him to come to Charlotte, to be our guest, and to speak at the St. John's Baptist Church.

He accepted our invitation and came to Charlotte as a guest in our home, and spoke to a very large and responsive audience at the

church. I must confess that I do not remember either the text or the content of his message! But I do remember how very warmly he was received and welcomed by our congregation.

But the warmth of his reception at the church was not to be compared with the warmth which greeted him in our home and among our neighbours! Vividly do I remember that the children - boys and girls - swarmed around him as we sat out in the open garden of our home, sitting in his lap and asking all sorts of questions about his life and his ideas. And with genuine interest and patience, he talked with them until we had to pull him away for another meeting. ...

Looking back on those pleasant days, I indulge the fond hope that he enjoyed his visit with us as much as we enjoyed having him as a very special guest in our home for that brief time."

"I was a college student at Goshen Indiana, from 1950-52, working for a BA degree. In November 1950, I received a telegram. It was from His Royal Highness Prince Makonnen Haile Sellassie, the second son of the emperor. He was visiting America, and would be in Chicago for a few days. He would like to see me at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, where he was staying. I went, Chicago was some 120 miles from Goshen. He had booked a room for me at the Hotel, which by my standards, was luxurious. The Prince was glad to see me. He said that his father had entrusted him with two important jobs. One was to find an oil-prospecting firm in America which would help with the exploration for oil in Ethiopia. The other was to take me back with him to Ethiopia."

"He was a few years older than I, but we were on easy terms with each other. I explained to him that I had begun my studies only a few months before, and I had to finish my degree before doing anything else. He asked me how long it would take for me to finish my course. I told him that I was working overtime to complete in two years the 120 credit hours needed for a degree, which would normally take four years. He suggested that I make plans to go to Ethiopia at the end of that two-year program. I could give no such commitment."

"Anyway, I am glad you have come. I want you to help me with some shopping in Chicago. I went to some good stores, but my God,

how racist these people are! They are positively rude, just because of my skin color. We won't speak in English, and even pretend not to understand English at all. I will speak Amharic, and you translate for me. I hear they are more courteous to foreigners, even if the skin is black. Besides, you can make them understand that I am a prince and all that. It will be fun to see what happens."

"So we went shopping. He would ask for the price or quality of some goods in Amharic. I would translate into English: "His Royal Highness would like to know the price of this crystal vase, and whether it is genuine lead crystal." The change in behaviour pattern of the sales staff was obvious. We had great fun together in many Chicago stores. And I got a good lesson in American race relations in 1950. My friendship for the prince also became more intimate. We had many conversations on American racism and its state then."

In 1952, Acharya K K Chandi from Christhavashramam, Manganam had been conducting a tour across America, delivering sermons as a guest of RTP Foundation. He attended a conference of the Mennonite Church and delivered a sermon. At the end of his sermon, an Indian youth came and acquainted with the Acharya. That was Varghese.

During his days at Goshen, Varghese used to be in touch with Mennonite Church who had provided him the scholarship for his studies in America. Mennonites believed in non-violence and they were following the basic characteristics of the early Church.

Acharya recalls that he met Varghese and befriended him for the first time on that occasion. "I have noted in my diary that I met Paul Varghese of Tripunithura belonging to Orthodox Church. My acquaintance with Paul Varghese was helpful to me in many respects. I delivered a lecture on the topic, 'Peace-Culture: Amidst Power Conflicts.' After listening to this lecture, he passed a comment, 'Americans attach importance to living in prosperity. It is good that you raised a challenge like this.' Paul Varghese joined me in another meeting also. Later, he handed over me a letter. He said in that letter that he had just $ 25 when he travelled from home to Ethiopia. Later when he travelled from Ethiopia to America also, he had $ 25 only.

Symbolizing that, he was donating $ 25 to Christhavashramam, Manganam."

In his diary, Acharya K K Chandi noted about the personality of Paul Varghese, "He seems to be a consecrate young man."

Prof. Eugene Nyda, the then Director of Bible Society and a great Biblical scholar was the Professor of Linguistics when Varghese was at Oklahoma University. He had a great regard for Varghese. One day, he initiated a talk with Varghese.

"What would you propose to do now?"

"I would like go back home."

"You came here to learn Theology and learnt a bit of it during your graduation. But to have a sound base, better, you study at Princeton College."

"But who would provide me scholarship for that?"

"No need to worry on that. I can meet your expenses at college."

He gave $ 500 to Varghese, which was a big sum during those days. Thus at the initiation of Prof. Nyda, Varghese could get admission at Princeton College.

Varghese commenced his agitation with Theology during his days at Princeton. He could not accept whatever the Western scholars in Theology were teaching. He used to write frequently opposing their concepts on the subject. Nevertheless, he had no reluctance to accept the good elements in Protestant Theology. Along with that, he started confronting their wrong points of view.

Varghese acquired more theological knowledge from Princeton. Yet, he could not build up a strong foundation. He had no chance to learn Eastern Theology at Princeton. He gained experience in pure thinking during his days there. Those who taught there were eminent Professors. Participating with them in various discussions and lectures, Varghese developed the knack of a thinking process that was pure in its essence. He got experienced in linguistic rules and learned Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, Hebrew, French and German languages there. He

also joined advanced courses in Greek and Hebrew. Having learnt different languages, Varghese could refer to books on a particular subject in all those language versions. He could enrich his practical knowledge by learning from efficient scholars and by taking part actively in various seminars where students and teachers took part. Varghese secured the highest grade among all students at Princeton.

In 1954, Varghese as the best senior student had the distinction of becoming the editorial critique of Princeton Seminary Bulletin.

Varghese could successfully complete the three-year course in two years. Alma Kaufman, one of his co students at Princeton wrote about him in a newspaper later, "With me, in my Philosophy class, there was one student who had learnt a lot of Philosophy; what were possible for us in his presence was to close our mouths and simply listen to him in admiration."

While studying at Union Biblical Seminary, Varghese had the opportunity to meet and acquaint with Dr M M Thomas. The Metropolitan recalls that incident:

"I first met M. M. in New York. I think it was 1953. He was spending a year reading at Union Seminary. I was an ordinary B. D. student at Princeton. He was already a Guru, well known in Indian Christian circles, as well as in WSCF circles. I was totally unknown in India, having left the country in 1947. My few youthful exploits in Ethiopia and the legends attached to them were most likely unknown to MM as they were unknown to many Indian Christians until much later.

I went to see him to learn and to be inspired. But I did it in the typical Indian way. I just barged in and introduced myself, a procedure MM did not particularly like. He made me to understand clearly that he had come to America to do some reading and did not have much time for idle conversation.

Anyway there was no idle conversation. I left after about 5 minutes, with the satisfaction that I had met the great man face to face."

"During my final year (1954) at Princeton Theological Seminary, we heard the announcement that Emperor Haile Sellassie was paying

an official visit to the USA, and that one of the places he had chosen to visit was Princeton University. I could only entertain faint hopes of seeing him from a distance, since it was unlikely that he would address the multi-thousand student body or anything like that. So I was surprised to be called into the office by the distinguished President of our Seminary, Dr. John Mackay (whom we students fondly but with awe, called 'Patriarch Mackay.') He told me that there would be a reception for the Emperor to which only the heads of faculty departments were invited, because the whole distinguished Faculty of Princeton would run to many hundreds, and there was not time enough even to introduce all the faculty members. He told me that President of Princeton University was inviting me specially to the reception because the Emperor had personally expressed a desire to see me! He was himself moderately surprised."

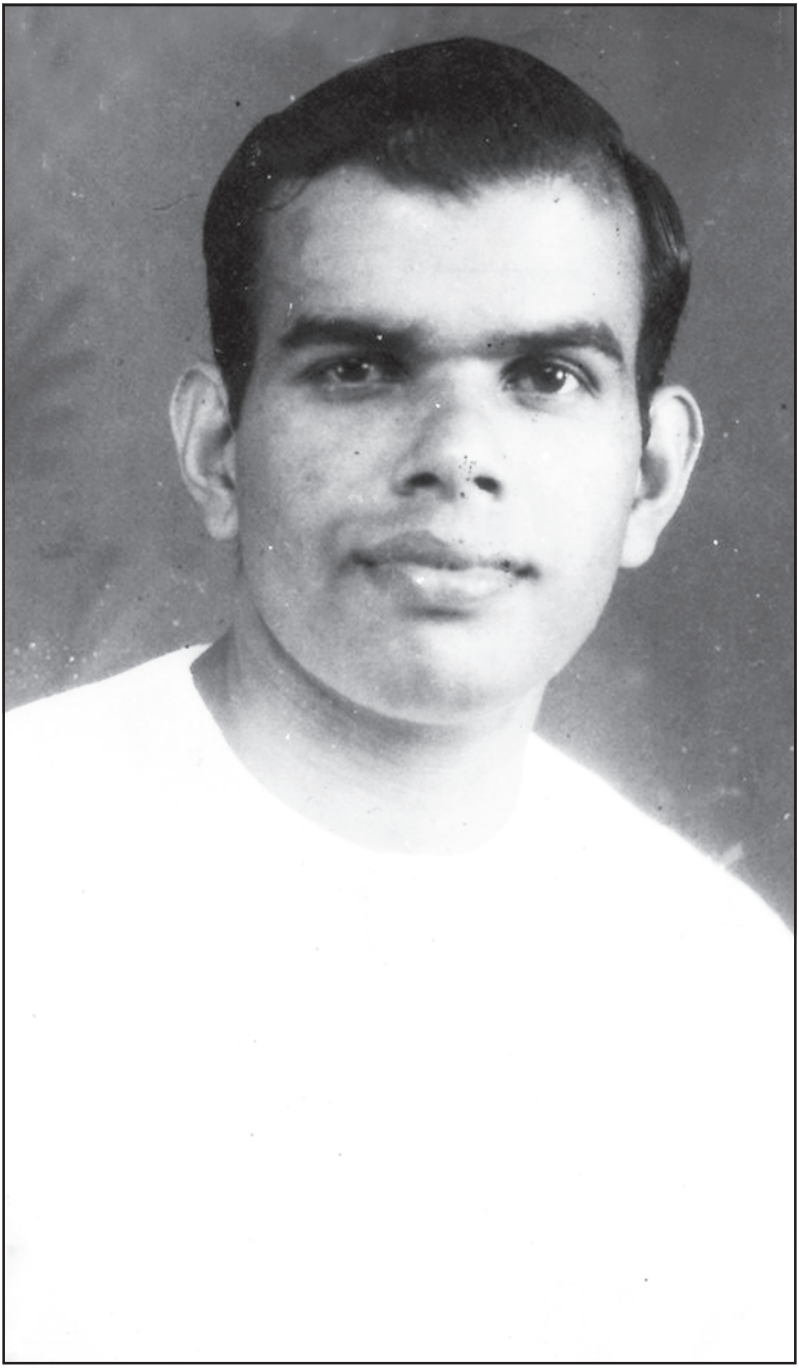
"At the reception there were about fifty heads of departments and heads of schools. I was the only student present. We lined up in a circle around a large reception room, and the President went around the line with the Emperor, presenting each professor to the Emperor. He heartily shook hands with each, but hardly stayed to mumble a greeting to each. As soon as he spotted me in the line, he began smiling, and to my embarrassment, was constantly looking at me, and not at the faces of the professors being presented to him."

"As they came around to me the President of the University said: "This is the young man Your Majesty wanted to see, Mr. Paul Verghese." "Yes, I know him", the Emperor responded beaming. And then to me in Amharic, "So this is your university. We have tracked you down. And we know that you have finished your studies and will be getting your degree in a few days. You are coming back with us to Ethiopia. No more excuses."

This was too much of surprise for Varghese. He felt very sad. How can he talk to the Emperor in the negative? He prayed deeply in his heart and said politely, "Your Majesty, I am profoundly touched. I am grateful for your Majesty's affection and interest. And I do want to serve Ethiopia and you. But it is now seven years since I left India in 1947. I must go back to India and only there make my decisions."

"There are no decisions to make. We are leaving this country in a few days, and we want to take you with us. We have a place cut out for you in Ethiopia. Do not go on stubbornly refusing."

The President and others inside the room were confused as to why the Emperor was in discussion with an Indian student of the Seminary. As a temporary means to escape, Varghese told the Emperor, "I will talk to Your Majesty's Secretary." Later, Varghese met the Secretary and told him that it was difficult for him to come to Ethiopia immediately and that it was too much necessary that he should return to India.



3

To Native Place

Paul Varghese quenched his thirst for knowledge to a good extent by finishing off his graduation and further studies in four years, normally scheduled for seven years and returned to his native land. After moving to Ethiopia in 1947 on teaching assignment, he had not visited his home even once. His return was only in 1954, after seven long years. After he returned, he stayed at home for a few days. His coming back now was after graduating on his own efforts. His father asked him, "Did not I tell you that you are good enough to pursue higher studies of your own?"

Pathrose Ramban of Mookencheril, a family relation of Paul Varghese had come to know that he was returning home from America. He had written a letter to Varghese wherein he suggested, "You have learnt a lot. What are your plans? I wish, you work with me in my movement (Sleeba Dasa Samooham)."

Very shortly on reaching home, Varghese joined Pathrose Ramban. They both travelled in the Northern villages of Kerala on foot carrying new clothes for those converted to Christianity in recent times. Their activities used to be conducting gospel preaching at churches and pavements, providing adequate clothes to newly converted Christians and visiting their homes, extending possible help to the poor and the like. They were spending their nights in churches or if the church remained closed for them due to factional feuds, they spent nights on the large veranda of churches at the western side. Once, the church remained close for Pathrose Ramban. Therefore, he had to sit on the veranda at the west. Some of the parish members assembled there and showered abuses on Ramban; he kept his cool and kept drinking the rice porridge he had without lending his ears to the abuses. Metropolitan recalls this scene often as the Ramban was too helpless and his image looked heart piercing. During later years, whenever the Metropolitan used to teach about monkhood, he used this incident as an example of humility and nobility.

Pathrose Mar Osthathios

Pathrose Ramban and Paul Varghese worked among the downtrodden; they had makeshift drums and other simple music instruments along with picture rolls to present Jesus Christ to Pulayas, Parayas and other low castes. Visiting them at their huts and enlightening them with gospel was an inseparable element of their mission. Usually, gospel meetings were at churches in the nighttime. Before the commencement of the meeting, sounding of bells was there and people would assemble at the church. Then they had evening prayers followed by the meeting. After the meeting, distribution of new clothes were there for poor widows, deaf and dumb, lepers, blind and physically disabled persons. Those poor people who needed assistance for treatment used to get financial support from Pathrose Ramban.

Once, during their journey, Ramban expressed his desire to have a document for the systematic conduct of the Sleeba Dasa Samooham. He told Varghese, "You work out a document for the proper conduct and successful execution of various things of Sleeba Dasa Samooham." Varghese thought seriously and taking good effort, prepared a document hand read it out to the Ramban. He responded, "Fine, Very good." He took the document, kept inside his carry bag and closed. After that, the document never came out of the bag.

Towards the end of their three-week journey, Varghese told the Ramban, "Now let me go to Kottayam. I am more interested in teaching." Thus, they said goodbye and separated most cordially.

The wish Varghese nurtured in his mind was to serve the Christian populace in Kerala. He was looking forward to identify a location for that. With this purpose in mind, he went to Kottayam. The Catholicose who was also the Malankara Metropolitan had his Head Quarters at

Devalokam, very near to Kottayam. HH Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II was the Catholicose then. Since Varghese was scared to confront the Catholicose directly, he did not go to Devalokam. During those days, the Theological Seminary of the Church was functioning at MD Seminary and Mathews Mar Athanasius Metropolitan (later, HH Baselius Mathews I Catholicose) was its Principal.

Mathews Mar Athanasius

Varghese went to MD Seminary to see the Metropolitan. When he entered the compound, Metropolitan was strolling in the courtyard. He enquired in a rough tone what the purpose of his visit was. Varghese replied that he wanted to meet some of the known persons in the Seminary like Deacon M V George, Deacon T J Joshua and Deacon K Philipose. Again, in an equally rough tone, Metropolitan told Varghese to go to the other side where Deacons are all there. This rough behavior from the Metropolitan caused some disappointment in Varghese. However, in later days, Varghese experienced the soft and kindhearted man behind the rough exteriors and had the opportunity to work together effectively. Years later, this Metropolitan was elevated as the Catholicose and Varghese became a Metropolitan of the Church. Commonly, people used to say that both these persons were rough, at first sight. Nevertheless, once we got closer to them, we would realize that they were indeed loving and kindhearted characters.

Paul Varghese lost his enthusiasm at the response of the Metropolitan on seeing him. He was expecting that the Metropolitan would enquire about him and his whereabouts. Varghese was a bit shy to disclose his life experiences and his wishes straight away to a person with whom he had no earlier acquaintance. May be his good luck, may be bad luck, there was no further queries from the Metropolitan. Varghese had some sort of a previous contact with

Deacon K Philipose. However, he had only heard about other two namely Deacon M V George and Deacon T J Joshua. He met all the three and established good relationships.

Acharya K K Chandi

After this Varghese reached Manganam and renewed his relationship with Acharya K K Chandi of Christhavashramam. Acharya recalls his second meeting with Paul Varghese and the incidents those followed, "Paul Varghese evinced interest to know more about the Ashram. He did stay there for a few days. We had discussed together many things and prayed together as he had been with me there more than once. I think he had expressed his inclination for an Ashram way of life. I did encourage him in this. Sadhu Mathaichan was alive then and Paul Varghese had great regard for him."

"I think Paul Varghese had become a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The fellowship had its foundation in non-violence of cross. It worked for justice, reconciliation and peace. It had cells at many parts of India. I think I suggested Paul Varghese to go to Delhi as the leader of a cell there."

As recalled by Mr K M Mammen, Paul Varghese stayed at the Christhavashramam for about two weeks. He was very specific in matters and had no hesitation to openly tell his views and stick to it.

Nevertheless, he was not very content with his stay there and was not very keen in the proposal to move out to Delhi. At this time, a friend Philip Athithottathil told him about the Fellowship House at Alwaye and about Mr M Thommen there who had deep insights to guide one in a spiritual dimension. In fact, Philip encouraged Varghese to go to Alwaye and meet him. Varghese travelled to Alwaye and met Mr Thommen at the Fellowship House. This meeting turned out to be an occasion of two men of unmatched wisdom coming together.

Metropolitan has narrated the incident of his meeting M Thommen and the consequent development of Fellowship House becoming his working centre. “After reaching my home land, I wandered around to identify a means for me to extend my services as much as I could. I enquired with many people and the initial suggestions pointed out to serving within the Church. With this in mind, I met a Metropolitan who was quite prominent then. However, that meeting was not very encouraging and therefore, I decided to keep away from the official leadership of the Church and thought of working among the laity of the Church as a layman. While I was searching for suitable avenues, I had an offer to run a Retreat Centre for Presbyterians in North India. Acharya K K Chandi suggested that I might work with him at the Christhavashramam. A few suggestions that were more similar came up from various sources. It was more or less at this time, I had the opportunity to meet Mr M Thommen. This led me to understand Prof K C Chacko. K C Chacko was the elder brother of K C Mammen Mappilai. He was a Professor of Philosophy at the Madras Christian College. As a student, he secured first rank in the University along with Dr S Radhakrishnan. He was a man of prayer. As he had only one lung, he could not work hard extensively. Yet, each hour in his life commenced with prayer and he lived in total dependence and submission to God. I did not have any direct acquaintance with him. Setting up The Fellowship House at Alwaye was to sustain his memory. Reaching the Fellowship House, I could meet Mr M Thommen and I could understand that he was spiritually rich. I felt a very high regard about him. Since I perceived him as God fearing, I sought his opinion as to what could I do. He said, ‘There is nothing new I can tell you. Yet, I did have a vision that God is bringing a man like you to me and that I should work with him. Therefore, it is possible that you can work here. Please look into it. However, there is no scope here to pay you well. Let us keep Rs 75 as your monthly salary. Even that amount, I am afraid, chances are limited.’ I agreed with him quite happily. Whatever be the consequences, I decided to work with him.”

Smt. Saramma Thommen had said about Paul Varghese meeting Thommachen and his joining Fellowship House. “After talking with

Paul Varghese for a short while, Thommachen had great appreciation. He was happier when it came up that he was the son of Paily master. Indeed, Thommachen was a student of Paily master. This meeting took place in August 1954. The annual retreat was to take place in September and Thommachen invited Varghese to participate. Varghese did participate full time. All those who were there found Varghese good and amicable. There was a meeting of the council in which the issue to take up Varghese as an employee came up for discussion. The consensus was not to take him for the reason that Fellowship House did not have enough finances to pay him a salary. However, Thommachen took interest and explained to others the background of Varghese. Gradually, the council members changed their stance. Paul Varghese was a person who found joy in all situations. For the first two months, he had his food from hotels and caught digestive problems. Subsequently, he used to have meals with us at lunchtime and share kanji with us at night. He used to manage a little bit of cooking for his breakfast and some snacks for the evening tea. There was a small building where K C Chacko sir stayed during his last days as a patient of Tuberculosis. Varghese stayed at this building. We were staying at the house of K C Chacko sir."

That small building where Paul Varghese stayed is still there almost in the same style. The office rooms of Fellowship House and Church Weekly used to function from there earlier, but now a new building complex has come up. Yet, that old building remains as it was but for periodic renovations. The building remains like that to recall where and how K C Chacko sir spent his last days. Even now, despite renovations, it looks very old. We can just imagine how Varghese lived during his days with Fellowship House.

K C Chacko

"I am happy. I could locate the man whom I needed." This was what

Varghese commented after his acquaintance with M Thommen.

A salary of Rs 75 was reasonably good in 1955. However, Fellowship House was not financially strong enough to pay that. Varghese was getting only Rs 20 a month in effect. He had no desire to get more because he was not in need of much money then.

'Alwaye was a large village then. It was much smaller that today's Perumbavoor. People used to visit Alwaye during summer days for taking bath and relaxing in their houseboats. The river where they were taking bath passed through Alwaye and the village looked like being content with the river embracing it. Aluva during those days resembled a vast stretch of land after the sharp curve following the location of the old Cathai Mills. There was a movie house and two churches, one of CSI and the other of Roman Church; there was a YMCA and a small Transport Office. The Marthanda Varma Bridge remains the same then and now.'[1]

Varghese came into this rural scenario happily and very shortly, became active with the community of Fellowship House, U C College and Settlement.

After a week of Varghese joining the Fellowship House, some students from U C College invited him for their Bible Study at the College Chapel. About this incident, late Dr A M Chacko, former Principal and Manager of U C College recalled, "It was during my final year BSc (1954 - 55), I could acquaint with Paul Varghese who got himself associated with Fellowship House and was staying there from the beginning of the academic year. As the Secretary of UC College unit of Student Christian Movement, I had close relationship with Mr M Thommen, the Secretary of Fellowship House. M Thommen had provided facilities for College students for having their prayer group sessions and Bible classes at the Fellowship House. Every Saturday evening, there is a meeting of SCM at the College and I went to invite M Thommen to address us that weekend. It was then I saw Paul Varghese, who had returned from America after his studies, for the first time and M Thommen introduced him to me. He said with all his humility, 'See, one greater than me has come here.' Paul Varghese was highly talented and energetic. Though I was just

a student, he spoke to me affectionately and informally. From my first talk, I could understand that I was sitting with a man scholarly in different subjects. I immediately perceived that he was an ideal choice to address a meeting where students and teachers of the college were attending and he could present topics those were most suitable for the occasion. Therefore, I discussed with him and set him apart for us for five continuous Saturdays. We finalized the topics also instantaneously. Before my leaving from there, he suggested that I could meet him as frequently as I wish and that he welcomed such meetings. I found him humble, informal and possessing a friendly warmth throughout. Consequently, I was meeting him frequently thereafter.

Paul Varghese had occupied the small cottage where K C Chacko, the founder of Fellowship House was residing. This turned out be an open house for us, the students. The group named Student Missionary Union (SMU) was assembling there. Whenever Paul Varghese was available at Fellowship House, he also participated and gave leadership in our prayers and fellowship. His presence helped attracting many students to this prayer group who were in the forefront in academics and non-academics.

The leadership provided by Paul Varghese among students did not confine exclusively to prayers and Bible studies. There was a system then to organize some variety entertainment programs of good quality in the college with the aim of fund raising for the activities of SCM unit. The program in 1954 - 55 had a choral drama named 'Justice for Jonah.' Students and teachers jointly presented this. Paul Varghese had taken the lead to train the participants and present it successfully on stage. This was an evidence of his high talents in the art of dramatics.

Those were days when all the students at UC College had to attend either Scripture classes or Moral Instruction classes. For conducting these classes, M Thommen and Paul Varghese were also joining other teaching staff of the college. Paul Varghese used to take Scripture classes for Christian students and Ethics for non-Christians. Hindu students were very keen to attend classes on Ethics.

Apart from all these, occasionally, Varghese used to step in as Guest Lecturer for Philosophy."

Prof T B Thomas remembers his association with Paul Varghese, "Paul Varghese did good service for a few years along with M Thommen at the Fellowship House. There is nothing wrong to call these years as the Golden Era of Fellowship House. The institution had grown forward substantially during this time. When Paul Varghese was at Alwaye, he and M Thommen had helped the activities of Student Christian Fellowship (SCF, same as SCM) at the college. I too joined them in such services. Meetings of SCF were during Saturday nights. Paul Varghese had taken keen interest in organizing Panel discussions and religious skits. M Thommen and Paul Varghese were very helpful in conducting Religious classes in college. Personally, on many occasions, I had sought help and guidance from Paul Varghese on different issues. He had a very warm and friendly relationship with our family. He had uncanny talents to speak on any subject. I could understand about Teilhard de Chardin and his Christian views from a talk delivered by Paul Varghese. He was capable to present high theological thoughts in simple style so that the ordinary men and women could comprehend them easily. During his speeches, even the naughty students used to listen to him sharply in absolute silence."

Dr D Babu Paul IAS also recalls those days, "I joined UC College as a student when I was 15 years. I was a rank holder and was an outspoken person. I had a keen interest in spiritual matters. Paul Varghese who was staying there and teaching Bible as a layman had a sort of affection towards me. Paul Varghese sir was instrumental in sustaining me in my love of God, Church and Bible without wavering in the adolescent excitements. Except on Sundays and the day of compulsory games, I used to accompany Paul Varghese sir during his walks holding a long umbrella; these were occasions for me to assimilate many inputs of knowledge from him. Many evenings, I used to walk with him from College Hill right up to Marthanda Varma Bridge; focusing his eyes to River Periyar, he used to share open his vast canvas of knowledge to me. These were unforgettable tidings for me even now. He used to teach me umpteen things looking at the

river separating into two parts, holding the railings of the bridge. On the top of settlement hill, on the western side of the parapet hall of the chapel, we used to sit and I listened to him. He taught me the limitlessness of knowledge. 'Knowledge resembles a horizon; it is akin to a mirage; realizing the limitlessness of knowledge is the beginning of knowledge.' Even now I just cannot but keep remembering that great scholar who taught me the limitlessness of knowledge; his words were so powerful that they haunt me even this day."

Well-known writer Dr C J Roy was a student then at UC College who has fond memories about the Bible study Paul Varghese had conducted. "Teachers are of high caliber. It is a rare thing that we see them smiling in classes. The scenario looks very serious. When I stood perplexed in this campus, different in many respects compared to other colleges I had been, I could hear a majestic voice from one of the classrooms. There stood a tall man, fare complexion, handsome appearance, his white attire enhancing his attractive posture; his face carried a broad smile throughout.

What he taught was a subject that has no place in the university examinations. However, his Bible classes turned out to many as the most likeable class and he, the favorite lecturer for most of those who attended his Scripture classes.

Paul Varghese was not with us for long; Alwaye College was an intermediary place for him in his long sojourn searching truth. Yet, it was a blessing for me and many like me; a face that get retained in our memory forever."

Smt. Saramma Thommen recalls the activities of Paul Varghese at Alwaye, "Paul Varghese had a great liking to work among students and youngsters. He used to say that the main reason for choosing Alwaye as his centre of activities was the proximity of UC College to Fellowship House. He believed that our Church will flourish if youngsters are in the right path.

Normally, everyday, Varghese and Thommachan used to be together from 7:30 to 8:30 in the morning. Sitting together, they would discuss matters related to Fellowship House as well as other issues.

They would pray together and discuss spiritual topics. I have no idea what all topics they were sharing between themselves. Thommachan had not disclosed them to me."

M Thomman

Later, the Metropolitan had written reminiscing M Thommen, 'Though he had no formal theological training beyond a year, his insights were rich in theological reflections those were imbedded in long term perspectives. Such thoughts were rare even among those who were fortunate to have undergone theological studies for long.'

Paul Varghese was with us at Fellowship House for just about two years and a half. There used to be Prayer groups, Bible classes or Discussion forums most of the days. Students and teachers from UC College and Settlement High School and the residents around our locality used to participate in these. He used to arrange Bible classes at the College premises also and pay visits to college hostels. Once, jointly with students, he presented the drama, Julius Caesar on stage at the college. He himself took the role of Caesar. He took lot of pain to equip the students with proper pronunciations to deliver the dialogues correctly. The two years and half when Varghese was with us was the Golden Era of Fellowship House. Presence of Varghese helped a lot in systemizing the activities of Fellowship House and also placing it in the right orientation."

Shortly after reaching Fellowship House, Varghese could freely mingle with the Christian community residing close to it. Soma George, who was there at that time says, "The Christian community around College Hill were living like a joint family. The atmosphere was different compared to elsewhere. In all events, everybody joined and managed things as if all are part of one family. Paul Varghese sir did not take much time to be an integral part of this community. People of Alwaye recognized his higher status and the nobility of that

personality. They respected and loved him and had high regards for him. Later, we heard him acknowledging his happiness and contentment experienced during his short stay in our community. More than being a great scholar, he was a lover of humanity incomprehensible to others. Memories about him would sustain in the minds of his friends from this College Hill community forever."

M Thommen used to guide Paul Varghese in the shoes of an elder brother. Varghese used to tell others about M Thommen as his elder brother. M Thommen always had in his thoughts that Varghese was certainly a person far above him. His wish was, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' He wanted to see the goodness and growth of Varghese. Smt. Saramma Thommen recalls her husband telling her, "He is to go far above, he will not end up here and he is going to be a world figure." Nevertheless, there were few people possessing some misconceptions about him. They thought Varghese had in him a bit of ego. As Thommen understood Varghese well enough, he used to explain things to those people and clear them off their misconceptions. These days, many marriage proposals came up for Varghese. Most of such letters were to M Thommen and Varghese used to tell Thommen to reply that he did not intent to get married.

Smt. Saramma Thommen recalls further, "The person Varghese was one that was difficult to comprehend. He was extra ordinary brilliant. There were people who were jealous on him for this reason. Yet, he had some weakness too; he used to lose his temper in no time. While he was here, that did not happen much. He used to pay visits to the entire surroundings including houses of the poor. Mixing up with children below ten years was something he enjoyed most. My seven-year-old daughter had a heart ailment and was under treatment from CMC, Vellore; during this time, Varghese used to spend time with her playing cards. It was not possible for her to walk and he used to carry her on his shoulders; he showed her films in a home projector. Many small children were good friends of Varghese. He was their most favorite for them among all of us. Fellowship House had Christmas celebrations every year. All these children would be there to enjoy the festive mood. He was the one who took initiative to give some presents to children. He would take the role of Santa

Claus and make everyone laugh with his comments. His behavior to all was the same with no differentiation between the well off and the poor. On invitation, he visited nearby institutions to deliver speeches or to take classes. He had spoken at the Adwaitha Ashram during Shivarathri Festival. This had good appreciation from many who gathered there. He was acceptable to all, including all religious segments. Later, he had done a series of talks at the Adwaitha Ashram. He knew Hinduism well to its depth. He possessed good knowledge about all religions. He was good in many languages and many had come to him to learn languages. He could write and speak fluently in English. His speeches in churches were in Malayalam only and that too in absolutely pure Malayalam not using even a single English word."

Varghese wanted a permanent capital fund for the Fellowship House; he thought it necessary that a few buildings are necessary for development. The retreats and such gatherings used to be at a room inside the residence of Thommen. Collecting money and maintaining accounts of the same were not to the tastes of Thommen. Therefore, he did not favor developmental projects. Varghese said that funds must come in from abroad that construction of buildings would be feasible. At the continuous persuasion from Varghese, Thommen had to yield at the end. Varghese suggested Thommen to work out a brochure narrating the motive behind setting up Fellowship House inclusive of its history until then. Thommen did this and Varghese sent their copies to his good friends and classmates abroad.

"The students who studied with me helped us well. Every year, students at the seminary collected funds for philanthropic activities. They decide to donate one-third of that to me. With this, we could construct a small building there and staying there, I could engage in more activities. I had a friend who had worked as an Engineer for a few years and then joined the seminary. He wrote to me, 'While working as Engineer, I had saved some money, which I was planning to donate somewhere for some noble works.' From him, we got Rs 25,000/- Using this, we built up the Fellowship House building. Thus, with the help of a few, we succeeded to start activities from there. During this time, I could spare my time with Student Christian

Movement and Orthodox Christian Students' Movement. I could engage myself a lot in Alwaye and Ernakulam concentrating among the laity. During these days, my younger brothers used to come to fellowship House and to stay with me occasionally extending their helping hands in whatever possible ways."

It was in 1955, construction building took place in Fellowship House. The plans and designs were exclusively by Varghese. The present Guest House, a building for retreats and cottage for women were those, which came up then. Whatever balance he had after the construction works, Varghese utilized to plant rubber plants in the six-acre plot Fellowship House already had. For good quality of rubber plants, Varghese himself submitted the application and chose the best of verities available. Varghese personally planted most of them without depending on others. Thommen had least interest in agriculture or such other outside activities.

Smt. Saramma Thommen opens the treasure chest of her memories, "Varghese had told us then, 'these children are young now; as they grow up, their needs have to be looked into. For this, we must raise some funds as capital.' Even our family was finding it difficult to have both ends meet those days. Later, we had consistent income from the rubber garden, which turned very useful. Varghese used to foresee things as if having in a vision and act accordingly. Fellowship House will never forget him. His ventured into everything after studying the issues well and understanding the people involved. Money was never his priority. Life style was very simple. He did not have any ill feelings or complaints or any strangeness with anything. He was familiarly interacting with anything and everything. Whatever be the field of activity, he would manage it with distinction. He had good concern about his family. He took initiatives for the marriage of both his younger brothers. He used to visit his house occasionally and do whatever he could, but used to tell, 'my house is at Alwaye.' He had a personal concern for Fellowship House as well as for all of us."

The words of Jesus, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"

seemed to reflect in the life of Metropolitan. One of the most fascinating virtues he had in his personality was his inexplicable affection and love he had with infants and children. Those who had experienced this affection could never forget this in their lives. Soma George who was one among them recalls, "Paul Varghese sir joined Fellowship House in 1954 when we were small children. During the two years and a half he was at Alwaye, he could keep children in the neighborhood happy and he could make them enjoy his company. He had some uncanny talent to attract children. Seeing these, one might feel as if he was performing a magic. At the first touch, the child might be reserved and would try to hide behind its mother, but we can see the child playing happily sitting in his lap very shortly. Once a child is present, he would not attend to anything else before befriending that child. Even if he was talking on some serious topic and a child passed by, he would stop his talk to take the child in his lap; thereafter the talk continued. Children were always free to get to him; there were no barricades in between.

Another point that I recall is his knack to deal with children according to their different ages. An infant lying on its back used to laugh aloud when he rocks his body smiling at the infant. Then he starts talking and the infant expresses its joy in its own body languages. More grown up children have their places on his lap and follows rip-roaring laughter. He plays with them elephant rides, making small beauties in sand and so on. When they grow up to comprehend things, he is the best storyteller. When we came to know him, I was eight and my sister Rema, six. He used to make us both sit on his laps and forget everything else to make us enjoy. He had told us many entertaining things about his experiences abroad. Whatever be the topic, he used to add some spices that we could have had good entertainment. He had explained complex scientific principles in very straight and simple language for us to understand. He taught us about universities for the first time. With his tongue, complexities turned simplified. Occasionally he laughed just like that and made our heads hit each other. I do feel, in our lives, there was no other time we were happier than this.

During Christmas season, he used to gather all children nearby to

decorate Christmas tree. Dressing as Santa Claus, he distributed sweets to all children. He had a great affection and a special care for Shanta, daughter of Jacob sir; as she was differently abled, she could neither walk properly nor speak legibly. He used to spare his time with Shanta without fail every day, however busy his schedules were. Whenever he came across poor children on his way, he had no hesitation to hold their hands in his and talk with them for a while. He also had a habit of giving some gifts to such children."

From the beginning of academic year 1955 - 56, Paul Varghese offered himself to take Bible Classes to College teachers one day a week based on St Paul's Epistle to Romans. Dr A M Chacko, who joined the college that year, had been attending these Bible Classes regularly. He says, "Epistle to Romans is one that reveals the mysteries of Christian faith in no uncertain manner. Paul Varghese explained this to us based on chapters 1 to 8 in so simple a style that we could comprehend them without any difficulty whatsoever despite possessing no theological background. I consider the opportunity I had to be a part of those classes as a very valuable experience in my life."

Paul Varghese and M Thommen were going to different parishes to conduct Bible Classes and Meditations. Due to factional feuds, many parishes had lost their spiritual status and therefore, these talks and classes provided them a new awakening and spiritual enthusiasm. M Thommen and Paul Varghese jointly conducted Bible classes and Meditations at the St George Orthodox Church, Mulakkulam belonging to Kandanad Diocese in December 1954. Mr I C Iype, a parish member recalls that incident:

"In 1947, factional feuds in our parish were at its climax. Even Pathrose Ramban, the Travelling Missionary of Sleeba Dasa Samooham could not enter the church. The Youth Movement of the parish that was active in many dimensions wanted to organize some spiritually enlightening programs to sustain members in true faith. A I Thommen, an old student of UC College was the Secretary of this Movement. Another member P T John was also a former student of UC College. These two took the initiative to contact M Thommen

and Paul Varghese and finalized the days December 9 to 12 (during the Yeldho Lent) for the program. The resource persons reached Mulakkulam parish on the evening of December 9. The series of classes commenced with prayers of evening hour. Paul Varghese took classes on Christian Faith, Holy Church, Holy Mysteries of the Church and Holy Confession on different days and hours whereas M Thommen concentrated on meditational sermons. On Sunday, December 12, following Holy Qurbana, there was a valedictory function where Paul Varghese addressed the Youth Movement members. Both of them returned to Alwaye in the afternoon. Those young members of the parish who attended this program are seventy years or more now, and they utilized this opportunity to interact with M Thommen and Paul Varghese and get their doubts on spiritual and theological matters clarified and many recall those good experiences even now."

Varghese had taken classes on 'Christianity and Communism' during 1954 - 55 during weekends at the CSI church located in Broadway, Ernakulam. Fr Vadakken was a regular participant in these classes. I C Iype also used to be a participant who recalls, "I could be a part of the classes on Christian Theology based on the subject 'Christianity and Communism' taken by Paul Varghese during my student days. A prayer group functioning at Ernakulam at that time organized these classes jointly with the Student Christian Movement. As a student, I could not fully comprehend the depth of these classes by Paul Varghese about Biblical truths and Christian Faith."

In 1954, a few young members of the Church formed an organization named 'Peace League', centered at Kottayam with the sole aim of settling factional feuds within the Malankara Church. Under the auspices of this organization, six members of the Church, from Orthodox and Patriarchal sides, commenced a fast at the courtyard of Kurishupally, Kottayam. The purpose behind this fast was to bring in peace in Malankara Church. Those who fasted were Fr Geevarghese Pampadikandathil, Fr Alexander Kodiatt, K E Mammen, M Kurian, T M Chacko and Driver Varghese.

As suggested by M Thommen, Paul Varghese came to Kottayam

Kurishupally to take Bible classes for those who were on fasting. Among them, Varghese had previous acquaintance with K E Mammen and M Kurian. Varghese had an intention to meet these two also. After the first class, they made a request that Paul Varghese may stay with them for a few days continuing with his Bible classes. They said, "Our days here are akin to desert life. If there is someone to teach us Bible, our life would be easier." Their comment that fasting looks easy with such Bible classes encouraged Paul Varghese. He took their words with the seriousness they deserved and took Bible classes in the morning and evening without break for thirty days. Not only that, Varghese also participated in fasting to a certain extent. They came forward with one more suggestion that there could be Bible classes for those who were coming there to visit the fasting members. Thus, Varghese took classes for such God fearing visitors also inside the Kurishupally. The news about the classes for those who were paying visits to Kurishupally spread all over the place very fast. Therefore, many people started turning up exclusively for attending his Bible classes.

P M Thomas, Secretary of peace League narrates these incidents: "One day, saying that he was there as directed by M Thommen, Paul Varghese came to Kurishupally. We came to know about him only then. The fasting was in a small temporary makeshift structure arranged at the backside of Kurishupally. Paul Varghese continually took Bible classes for our fasting members. They were very useful for them. The classes were touching the hearts of those who listened. He was taking classes after thorough readings from many texts of different languages. Paul Varghese had explained the purposes behind the exercise of fasting during these classes. His presence at Kurishupally during the days of fasting provided a world outlook to this fasting. Bishop Bell and a few preachers of Maramon Convention came here and addressed the fasting members and visitors. On Sundays, there used to be large gathering at this church and Paul Varghese took Bible classes for them. People appreciated these classes as they were heart touching."

Metropolitan has his own reminiscence of this event: "HH Baselius Geevarghese II was the Catholicose then. Through some sources,

HH came to know that I was taking Bible classes at Kurishupally. One Sunday, Fr K Philipose (Later, Dr Philipose Mar Theophilose) came to me and said, 'Today, you were the subject of discussions at Devalokam.' Anxiously, I enquired the matter. Fr Philipose quoted the words of Bava. 'One Paul Varghese is around here teaching Bible at Kurishupally. Who knows which Bible? Looks like one imported from America.' Bava was not in much favor with Peace League. HH perceived their actions as loud noises of some petty group knowing nothing. Bava had no appreciation about people running after peace without analyzing the facts involved. Along with all these, HH felt irritated that a laity from America was teaching them Bible. Even, HH delivered a speech at Devalokam about belittling me a bit. Fr Philipose advised me to meet HH at Devalokam and clear the misunderstanding. I agreed to go provided Fr Philipose accompanied me. After my return from abroad, I have not gone to Bava Thirumeni yet. The reason why I did not go was my disappointing experience of having met one or two Metropolitans earlier. Notwithstanding all these, I used to carry loads of new dresses on my shoulders for distributing among newly baptized Christians along with Pathrose Mar Osthathiose when he was a Ramban."

"Fr Philipose took me to Devalokam in his Morris Minor and introduced me to His Holiness, 'This is Paul Varghese.' Bava received me happily and affectionately. He asked a Deacon to bring a mat. On bringing it, Bava Thirumeni asked me to sit on the mat. Kallasserril Bava would not normally ask anyone to sit before him. Therefore, it was a recognition that I got the privilege to sit before him. Once I sat on the mat, Bava Thirumeni asked Fr Philipose, 'You may go and wait behind; I am going to ask a few questions to Paul Varghese.' I perceived this as a sort of trial. Truly, I sat there a little scared in mind."

"The trial lasted some two hours and more. It was rather a detailed examination. His Holiness asked me about 200 questions, all Bible related ones. My respect and adoration about Bava Thirumeni increased manifold. HH had the scholarship in him to ask these many questions, which is not that simple. For me, as one who studied Theology from the West, found the Biblical insights HH possessed

astonishing. I was in a different world perceiving the Scriptural wisdom HH had without any formal training in Theology or Bible Study in the Western ways. I answered all questions as best as I could. At the end, Bava Thirumeni said, 'Your answers are good; I am happy. Of all the answers, I found incorrectness in just two of your responses. About those two Biblical portions, our teachings should be like this. All others from you are in line with our true faith.' HH gave the correct answers about those two he assessed me wrong. One of those questions were about the ordination of St Paul, whether it was direct from God or through the hands of man. My answer was this: 'In all his epistles, St Paul has stated that he got his ordination not from men, but direct from God.' Bava asked me not to teach like that. St Paul received his ordination through the hands of Ananias. HH assured me that he would teach me further. Thus, HH advised me just one or two things then."

"Immediately, HH summoned Fr Philipose and told him jokingly, 'You know this man? He is Paul Varghese. Like you, this man too went to the West and studied Bible. However, what he teaches is not like what you teach. He has true Orthodox faith in him, not like you.' Bava passed a good certificate about me. A new chapter commenced in my life. It was the beginning of a new relationship. Bava Thirumeni was very fond of me since then. On many occasions thereafter, I had been to HH and I could learn and comprehend many things sitting at his feet. There are two Metropolitans in Malankara Church who had great influence on me; they were Kallasserril Bava and Pampadi Thirumeni. I developed great adoration on Pampadi Thirumeni not because of the scholarship in His Grace, but because of the nobility of character. Whatever be that, during those days, I never had any ambition to be ordained as a clergy. Instead, I preferred to serve the Church and humanity as a laity."

Dr Philipose Mar Theophilose, who took the initiative for this face-to-face confrontation between Bava Thirumeni and Paul Varghese recalls, "What all questions Bava Thirumeni asked, Paul Varghese answered them smartly. After Varghese left, HH shared his feelings: 'He is not like what I thought; he is a really smart one. He gave excellent answers to all my questions. We are not counting him as

part of our Church and he is wandering from place to place. We must utilize him the right way.' I told Varghese what all Bava Thirumeni disclosed to me. He was very happy and returned to Alwaye."

Factional feuds within Malankara Church were very severe at that time and many saw in Paul Varghese a capable person to provide spiritual leadership to the Church. K M Mathew, the then General Manger of Malayala Manorama and later, its Chief Editor, wrote to Paul Varghese on 18 October 1955: "I know that you are doing a very useful work; but I hear that you have many discouragements also; I have no suggestions to offer, but I shall always bear this in mind and try to be in touch with you. ... The only hope for our Church is to guide our young men and if we have a set of leaders like you who could do the work, it will be a great service done to our God-forsaken Church."

Under the auspices of Fellowship House, M Thommen and Varghese organized Bible Study Classes and Seminars. The Bible Study Class conducted for Christian teachers from Schools and Colleges during 1955 May 2 to 27 was an important one among those. The purpose behind this program was to equip teachers in spiritual knowledge so that they could enlighten students with true spiritual awareness. Fr Dr K C Joseph, Mathew P John, M Thommen and Paul Varghese were the resource persons who led the month long program prior to the beginning of the new academic year.

The students of Malankara Orthodox Church used to assemble once in a year under the banner of Syrian Students Conference. M Thommen was its Secretary. The conference of the year 1955 was at Vennikkulam that took certain very important decisions. The name of the organization underwent a change as 'Orthodox Christian Students Movement of India.' The new office bearers elected were Daniel Mar Philexinose as President, Deacon M V George (Later, Dr Geevarghese Mar Osthathiose) as Vice President and Paul Varghese as the General Secretary.

In this important conference, Paul Varghese had taken Bible classes. In Church Weekly 1955 May 8 issue, one delegate wrote

about these classes, "Bible Classes and related discussions initiated by Mr Paul Varghese were enlivening."

The Vennikkulam conference rechristened the Orthodox Student Movement and three stalwarts of the Church took over the reins from thence. The editorial of Church Weekly 1955 May 8 issue was on these developments. This editorial reveals the characteristics of various students' movements those days and the nature of responsibilities Paul Varghese had undertaken.

"The Syrian Students Conference held at Vennikkulam ended on a successful note. These conferences had been there efficiently for the last 46 years. This year, this has transformed as a Student Movement. The conference ended in such manner that it has not envisaged any of the enlivening activities inherent with a student movement; rather, a new name, Orthodox Christian Students Movement of India, looked attractive in line with the Student Christian Movement of India (SCM). Sri M Thommen who organized these conferences for four or five years brilliantly withdrew from the position of its Secretary. In a similar manner, the responsibilities of Secretary have now come to Paul Varghese who already has enough workload as a member of Fellowship House and with his other engagements. The conference has a new name now as a Students Movement, but it may not be practical for Paul Varghese to undertake the travel commitments and other heavy organizational burdens associated with this new assignment. It is quite clear that the students organization has in mind that Paul Varghese needs to take up journeys or related works only to the extend manageable or affordable to him and nothing more. Student movement indeed is a vast set up that needs to come up with the hard work of more than one secretary who can spare whole of their time for this. For full time secretaries, travel and other expenses are to be reimbursed; no such decisions are there in this conference rather than entrusting the entire burden to the newly chosen secretary. They have disbursed themselves with the satisfaction that there is nothing for them to worry now. However, it is a pertinent point that a decision has certain responsibilities too. Once a decision is there, those who take up assignments so decided should express their positive consent to take up such responsibilities.

If the leadership of Paul Varghese has to be beneficial to student movement, one or two youngsters should come forward to work in tandem with him. They must receive reimbursement of their expenses and should have some amount as wages. For this, members of the student movement must raise funds and hand over the same to the Secretary. However, such deliberations were absent in the preparatory meetings of committee members for the last conference. By endorsing a new constitution, members had the responsibility to comprehend the seriousness attached with it, which was not there. Therefore, the success of this student movement may stand as a heavy burden for its new Secretary. We believe that each and every student of the Orthodox Church would perceive these issues in its right sense and extent their full support in all dimensions to the newly elected Secretary, whose talents are immense."

N M Abraham, who was the Chief Editor of Church Weekly then, was a journalist of high intellect; he qualified the position of Student Movement's Secretary as one of heavy tasks, but Paul Varghese worked hard to accomplish his responsibilities diligently and as best as possible. He endeavored to stabilize an organizational infrastructure for the Movement and his efforts ended up successfully to very large extent.

"I was fortunate to take over the responsibility of Syrian Students Conference in 1955. I could formalize an organization named Mar Gregoriose Orthodox Christian Students Movement. It used to be just an annual conference until then but I succeeded to establish local units at different colleges with local leadership to manage their affairs and systematize a Movement in an effective manner during 1955 and 56. I recall with great satisfaction and content that we could set up branches for this Student Movement in North Indian centers such as Agra and Calcutta."

Paul Varghese successfully engaged with Student Christian Movement (SCM) along with Orthodox and Protestant students and teachers to function as its Honorary Secretary during 1954 - 55. Likewise, he was the General Secretary of Orthodox Christian Students Movement during 1955 - 56. In both these capacities, he

could carry on his service with quality all over India. The Metropolitan has stated that these were invaluable experiences in his life formulating his thought processes and his spirituality.

He narrates how the Student Christian Movement of India (SCM) influenced him: "The Indian SCM came rather late into my life since I had to have my entire university education outside my own country. Yet my association with it in later years has been one of the significant influences in my Christian growth.

The Intellectual stimulation that I experienced both in conferences and in committees was not the least of these benefits. I do not see how else my mind could have come in touch with the best Christian thinking both within and without India. It was through my work with the Indian SCM that I came to consider seriously the whole problem of Christian responsibility in nation-building, and became acquainted with the problems of university education in India."[2]

C John Mathai, who was the Kerala Provincial Secretary of SCM sates about Paul Varghese and his personality and services: "While I was the provincial Secretary of the Student Christian Movement in Kerala (1953-56), Mr. Paul Varghese very bindly agreed to work with me as the Honourary Associate Secretary (1954-56). He was at that time working in the Fellowship House, Alwaye; and was being greatly appreciated by students and others for his talks and Bible classes. So we invited him to lend his service to the S.C.M also for the benefit of a wider section of students. His exposition of the Bible and the gospel of Christ was quite unique and enlightening, as he always related his subjects of talk to the current problems and helped his listeners to face real life in the light of Christ's teachings. Whenever Mr. Paul Varghese was a speacker we invaiably had a good audience.

The Triennial conference of the S.C.M was held at that time in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Mr. Paul Varghese attended the conference along with the delegates from Kerala. He was a great friend and companian for the students at the conference and during the journey to and from Ceylon. He took part actively in the delebarations of the conference and created such a great impression that there after he got requests for talks from different parts of India.

While we were working together, afterwards also, I used to invite him to our house and we enjoyed his fellowship greatly. His codiality and love for children were quite exceptional. Our children still remember how they enjoyed his company when he used patiently to tell stories and join in their games. So when we think of his Grace Mar Gregorios we see him as a person full of love and affection, but one who couldnot tolerate hyprocracy and foolishness."

In 1955, Paul Varghese became a part time teacher with Orthodox Theological Seminary at Kottayam. This was recognition to his having proved his talents. He had returned from the Seminary with a heavy heart in 1954 and now, after a year, he returned to the Seminary as its teacher. The reasons behind this appointment would have been the love and affection HH Catholicose had on him and the influence of Fr K Philipose. Principal of the Seminary was HG Mathews Mar Athanasius Metropolitan (later, Mathews I Catholicose). His colleagues in the teaching faculty were Fr M V George, Fr T J Joshua, Fr K M Alexander and Yuhanon Malpan. To this well-known fellowship of clergy, Paul Varghese, one among the laity joined as a teacher clad in pure white dhoti and juba.

Cyril Ramban, who was a student of the Seminary at that time recalls, "Those were days when it was difficult to conduct classes at the Old Seminary as factional feuds were at their climax; therefore, our classes were at MD Seminary at the building attached to the chapel and nearby rooms. Paul Varghese joined the Seminary as a Professor, but he was a laity among the existing five clergy. Our Theological Seminary had its affiliation with Serampore University since 1953 for its BD Course. Therefore, we had to follow their syllabus containing Old Testament, New Testament, Comparative Critical Studies, Moral Theology, Comparative Religion and Modern Church History. Catholicate History, Thaksa familiarization and Syriac Sheemappadi - Ekkara were subjects for non-detailed studies. Ancient Church History or Holy Mysteries of the Church or Faith related studies were not part of the curriculum then. Paul Varghese had the topic Gospel According to St John to teach us; this contained the basics of our Orthodox faith. I have not forgotten what he taught us then about the nobility of the Gospel According to St John and the

inner meanings involved therein along with the depth of spirituality one could perceive here. His explanations did not confine to the external history of the gospel or the critical evaluations of the subjects presented there. The characteristics of his discussions on the topic allotted to him were revealing the faith of our Church inherent within gospel truths. The students were feeling proud of the one who was teaching them these as also about the mysterious nature of the faith of our Church he taught them. His class is responsible for inculcating in me a thirst to learn Theology at its depth. Principal had requested him, 'may be a day in a week, you must come here and teach.' Paul Varghese came to handle classes for us on the basis of this invitation."

Kuriakose Mar Cleemis was a student of Paul Varghese who says about his classes, "He used to teach us truth in its depth, but in a most simple way. I have never seen a teacher in my life other than him who teaches any deep topic in very simple manner which anyone could comprehend."

Since returning from America, Varghese used to be in touch with his friends through letters. He used to send his letter to one of his friends, who in turn, took copies and distributed to all their friends in America. On his birthday in 1956, he prepared a letter, which contained a detailed plan he envisaged about his future. He had also mentioned his desire to pursue higher studies at Yale Divinity School. This letter is below:

Dear Friends,

This time the silence has been longer than usual. Pressure of work is only part of the explanation. The enervation of the will brought about by the climate must bear the rest of the blame.

The tropical climate however has not kept me from trying to do a good deal. I give below a list of a few things I have been doing. It usually means neglecting my friends. The result is often heavy loss of friends. A few forgive and persist in writing. Many forget. They are too busy. So I must also forgive and persist in writing. Many forget. They are also too busy. So I must also forgive.

But then, I need your prayers. I simply cannot get along without

them. Here are a few items that you can give thanks for:

APRIL & MAY (1) A very successful *University Commission Conference* where a group of Christian University teachers got together for ten days to consider the future of the Christian colleges in India, and the whole University system. I gave the opening address on University and Religion and led the group discussions daily on Christian Community in Residential Colleges.

(2) A Christian Students' Conference. About two hundred Christian students in conference for three days.

(3) A *Leadership Training Camp* for the Secretaries of College Christian Unions. A dozen young men in camp with four excellent leaders and myself for one week.

(4) *Summer Bible School for Christian Teachers.* Four weeks of living and studying together with 17 High School and college Teachers. Six hours of study a day, six days in the week. Four Instructors. I taught Old Testament Introduction, Sermon on the Mount, Romans, and Church History.

JUNE & JULY. (1) Six week 7000 mile all-India tour visiting Christian students in College Centers.

(2) I got back from tour on the 15th of July and have now started in on a full program of work here. Keep something like the following in mind when you pray for me:

MONDAY: Writing for the Church Weekly (am contributing editor) usually an article a week and a page of Doctrinal Question and Answers. Evening: Bible Class for younger staff of Union Christian College.

TUESDAY: Morning: Scripture Class for 130 Seniors at College. Evening: Women Students' Missionary Union Bible Class.

WEDNESDAY: Morning: Scripture for 100 Sophomores. Evening: Editorial Board Meeting forThe Church Weekly.

THURSDAY: Morning: Scripture Class for Seniors, Evening: Men Students' Missionary Union Bible Class.

FRIDAY: Study and preparation for week-end Retreats, Addresses, Sermons and classes. Evening: Women's Social Service League: Bible Class.

SATURDAY: Evening: Student Christian Fellowship Meetings, attended by 200 Christian Students.

In addition to these, I travel to various College centers over the week-end to meet Christian student groups. While I am in town, a steady stream of student visitors call at the house for counselling and fellowship.

I narrate all these with two purposes in mind: one, that you may forgive my not writing as frequently as I should; two, that your prayers may share this heavy burden with me.

Meanwhile, the suggestion has come forward that I must qualify myself to teach in a Theological Seminary. This may mean that I may have to spend another couple of years in study at a place like Yale Divinity School. I may come over in the Fall of 1957. It would be good to be back in the U.S., but I know that my call is certainly to labor in this land.

I am anxious to know how things are with you. Drop me a line when you can. God bless you.

Yours in His love,

PAUL VARGHESE

Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia visited India in 1956. Jawaharlal Nehru was our Prime minister. After his visit of North Indian centers, the Emperor came to the South. During the grand reception accorded to him at Cochin, Varghese expected to have a glimpse of him, but could not. After all, Varghese was virtually nobody here. Emperor was residing at Bolghatty Palace adjacent to Cochin. Varghese could not even reach anywhere near the boat that ferried Emperor Haile Selassie to Bolghatty. As he was simply standing near the jetty in some sort of disappointment, a group who were part of Emperor's conclave, but meant to travel in a different boat came there. Instantly, one among them just stepped into the boat, but after seeing something

rushed out and shouted, “There he is! This is the man I was talking about.’’ Prince Makonan, Lord of Haran came forward and embraced Varghese. “We have finally found you. My father wants to see you. Our ambassador in Delhi, His Highness Ras Imru, will talk to you about it. I must now get to the island. Father will be looking for me. I will tell him that I have seen you.” Varghese was happy that he could make a contact at least.

“That evening the formal contacts began. First it was the Ethiopian Ambassador in Delhi, His Highness Ras Imru Haile Sellassie, a cousin of the Emperor, a poet, a venerable figure for all Ethiopians. He told me that the Emperor had talked to him about me, and that he had heard a great deal about me before coming to India. He said that the Emperor had asked him to persuade me to go to Ethiopia. I told him that I was deeply involved in religious work, and should stay in India a little longer. Ras Imru later came to be a close friend, and we met often in Addis Ababa or New Delhi in later years.”

Next contact occurred in the morning. Government of India officially asked Varghese to meet the minister who was playing host to the Ethiopian visitors. He was Colonel Jagannathrao Krishnarao Bhonsle. His eligibility was that he fought for the freedom of India in 1942 in the Volunteer Army of Subash Chandra Bose. Varghese met Bhonsle at the Ernakulam Guest House. Attire of Varghese was very simple, juba and dhoti.

The minister looked at Varghese up and down; his body language was a sort of mocking. “So, you are the man. Let me explain things to you. The government of India always seeks to please its distinguished guests. This guest, however, has asked for something which is not in the government’s power to give. He is asking for one of our citizens. On behalf of Prime Minister Nehru and the government of India, I would request you to accept the offer of the Emperor that you work on his personal staff in Ethiopia. You can mention the salary and other terms you want. His Majesty is ready to give you anything you demand. Congratulations.”

The language one could perceive form his eyes and voice was of contempt. He would have assessed the Emperor as one who was

too foolish to offer such a lucrative position in his personal staff conclave to a man too ordinary as this one. Such thoughts would have been ruling his mental faculty.

Varghese replied, "Sir, I am deeply honored by His Majesty's offer. And I thank the Government of India for communicating it to me. I regret I am not able to accept it. I am a simple worker of the Christian Church. I am getting a salary of Rs. 75 (about US $ 16) per month. And I am quite happy with my salary and my work. I would like to continue in that work."

"What! Do you know what an unusual offer and opportunity you are turning down? Do you understand what is being offered to you?"

"I believe I do, Sir. My vocation from God, however, is not to work in palaces, but to serve ordinary people, as I am now doing."

Bhonsle said, "You are an extraordinary man! You are exactly the kind of person that Prime Minister Nehru is looking for, just now."

He stopped for a while. Varghese was wondering what he was going to tell now. He continued, "Prime Minister Nehru has a scheme for bringing some discipline into our nation. He wants to start in the high schools of our country. It is called 'National Discipline Scheme'; the idea is that each high school student would be required to do a period of service in our villages before he completes school. The Prime Minister wants a person of character to be in charge of that national program. He has asked me to be on the lookout for someone like you. Come to Delhi. We will fix it up for you."

The minister's mocking language disappeared. He started showing respect openly. However, he had a reputation then as an opportunist. In all these face-to-face dialogues, Varghese firmly believed that Prudential Grace would guide him. Words flew onto his tongue just like that for him to reply:

"Thank you, Sir, for your confidence in me. And I thank the Government of India for its offer to me. But this is a job which requires organizational skill, which I lack. I am better at working directly with people."

"You will have plenty of opportunity working directly with young people in high schools, and as far as organization is concerned the government has its own institutional structures and methods in that field. You would not have to worry about these. You only give inspiring leadership. I will be returning to Delhi in three or four days, and you can join me there."

"Thank you, Sir, but I do not think that is God's calling for me. I will continue with my present work, in which I am quite happy."

The expressions of Bhonsle turned very friendly. He found out many details about Varghese. He called in his wife who was in the next room. She was too modern looking a woman. They met at Singapore and entered into marriage. He introduced Varghese to her, "Look, this man is turning down the Emperor's offer, and he has also turned down my offer on behalf of the Prime Minister, of the National Discipline Scheme job. Remarkable man!" They spent some time talking and once it was over, Varghese felt relieved. Bhonsle insisted Varghese to call on him at Delhi when he was there to which he agreed positively. During the entourage of the Emperor, Varghese had to talk with Mrs. Bhonsle on many occasions. He was not comfortable with the mannerisms she displayed before him. She too invited Varghese to pay a visit to them at Delhi. Very cordially, he consented and withdrew from the scene diligently.

"I had not yet seen the Emperor personally. I made no move to ask for an audience. The next day there was a grand public reception for the Emperor at our Church's Engineering College in Kothamangalam. I was invited and was seated on the front row in a large audience. I tried to catch the eye of the Emperor several times, expecting a smile of recognition. He saw me from the stage, but, instead of smiling, was glaring at me in apparent anger. I was depressed, for I had great regard and affection for the man."

"The next day the Emperor was visiting the head of my church in Kottayam. The Emperor's church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, (often wrongly called the Coptic Church), was in communion with our church, the Indian (also wrongly called Syrian) Orthodox Church. The five ancient Asian-African Orthodox churches, the Egyptian (the

true Coptic), the Syrian, the Armenian, the Indian, and the Ethiopian, belonged to the family of "Oriental Orthodox Churches", as distinguished from the family of Byzantine or "Eastern Orthodox Churches", comprised some twenty churches of Greece, Russia, Constantinople, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, and so on. The two families had separated from each other in the fifth and sixth centuries, subsequent to the Christological controversies arising from the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD)."

"Baselios Geevarghese II, Catholicos of the East, the head of the Indian church, was already in his nineties. A dignified and saintly prelate, he was widely respected by all, and was visited once even by Prime Minister Nehru and other dignitaries. I had gotten to know him well, and I was one of his special favorites. I had been asked to act as interpreter, since my Catholicos spoke little English, and I could translate directly between Malayalam and Amharic."

"The aged Catholicos had come to the front door of his modest residence in Devalokam ('the world of the gods'), Kottayam, accompanied by me and others, to welcome the Emperor. The formalities of welcome over, the Catholicos had to be held by two deacons and guided to the reception room, where he was to converse with the Emperor. I came behind, guiding the Emperor to the reception room. He had not even smiled to me. He now started speaking to me in Amharic: 'You are the most wicked man I have met in my life.' The rancor in the tone was unmistakable. I certainly did not want to hurt the feelings of the Emperor, for whom my great admiration was compounded with sincere affection. Without thinking much, I blurted out: 'It is not wickedness, Your Majesty. I am a servant of the Church. He (pointing to the Catholicos in front) is the head of my Church. I will do whatever he asks me to do.' 'I do not believe you', the Emperor said. 'Not he, not even God Himself can bend your stubborn will.' He was angry."

Shortly, the official exchanges of ideas between His Holiness and His Majesty commenced. Varghese enjoyed translating their dialogues. The Catholicose started like this, "Your Majesty, my own feelings at this time are like those of the aged Simeon in the Temple

Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia with HH Baselius Geevarghese II Catholicos at Orthodox Seminary, Kottayam.

in Jerusalem welcoming the Jesus child: I can now depart this life in peace, for mine eyes have beheld the face of the only Emperor our churches have."

"Your Holiness, what greater happiness can a king worn out by the cares of state have than beholding the face of a saintly person like you?"

This dialogue enhanced the regards Varghese had about both of them. The Emperor said at the end, (which too Varghese had to translate) "What about this stubborn young man? We need him in Ethiopia, and he refuses to come."

"No one can persuade him against his will", replied the Catholicos. "But he will do what is right and good, Your Majesty."

Reply of the Catholicose made Varghese happy. HH did not have any intention to impose his authority on Varghese; there was no intention at all to force Varghese to do as the Emperor wanted. The response of HH was measured and careful. He retained the personal freedom of Varghese to decide about himself. At the same time, HH saw to it that the matter remained open. His Majesty directed his personal staff to hand over his Delhi address to Varghese. He was returning to Delhi the next day and it was clear that he expected a reply from Varghese.

After His Majesty bid farewell from Devalokam, His Holiness called Varghese to him and said, (Many of the Metropolitans of the Church were present along with some leaders from the laity) "Everybody wants Paul Verghese. I need him in our church, the Emperor wants him in his country, and there is only one Paul Verghese. It will be good for our Church if you go to Ethiopia and work with the Emperor; he is our Emperor; you will be able to help our church a lot from there; but it will be good also if you stay here and continue the work. I cannot tell you what to do. You must go home, pray devoutly, and make your decision in prayer again." Varghese concurred with this advice.

"I promised to do so and took his leave. I had gone a few yards from his residence, when he sent a deacon to call me back. As I

came in, he dismissed all the others and asked me to sit down before him on the floor, on a grass mat which had been laid for me."

"He talked to me affectionately for a long time, and said how difficult it was to make right decisions. He said he believed what he had said to the others, about my presence in India being very necessary for the Church, since my spiritual *labors* had been blessed by God in an unusual way. He then went on to say how equally good it would be for me as well as for our church if I would go and work with the Emperor on his private staff. It would be an honour to our church, and the Emperor himself would help our church through me."

"He then said that I should pray and make the decision in the context of prayer. He said he would himself be praying that I make the right decision. He then cautioned me about trying to impose my own preferences on God in prayer, and then saying that it was God's answer to prayer. He told me the story of two pious Catechists, the son of one of whom was marrying the daughter of the other. Both were praying to God profusely, as catechists and evangelists are prone to do; the boy's father was praying God for a large dowry from the bride's family, while the bride's father was asking God that the dowry may be as low as possible. The Catholicos asked me again not to

push God to get my own way from Him."

"As I left his presence, I prayed fervently within myself, that I may be completely free from all self-seeking, genuinely and sincerely open to God's guidance. There was the possibility that the admiration and applause I received from people for refusing the Emperor had gone to my head. Who knows the ways of the heart? God gave me an idea on how to proceed. I went back to my home in Alwaye Fellowship House, prayed some more, and called together three of my friends, all from my church: the Revd. Dr. K. C. Joseph, lecturer in English, and Prof. T. C. Joseph, lecturer in Botany, both from the Union Christian College where I also taught part time, and Mr. M. Thommen, my senior colleague and Secretary of the Fellowship House. I told them in some detail what had transpired in the three or four days preceding; also said that I had decided that I could not trust my own will. I would abide by any unanimous decision that the three of them together would make in prayer, whether I should go to Ethiopia or not. I gave them full assurance that whatever their joint decision was, I would accept it without question as the will of God, and act in accordance with it."

"We were used to praying together as a group. We prayed together now that the will of God may be done. My colleagues thought it was too important a decision to be made on the spot. We should wait in prayer for twentyfour hours, and the three others should meet again separately to decide. The next day we four met again. The other three had met and come to a decision. I was now in my own mind open to either possibility. It was my colleague, Mr. Thommen, who announced their decision. He said, "Vareechan, we all know very well that it was because of you that God had blessed this institution (the Fellowship House). It has now become a center of light to many. Without you, it may go down. For me, it will be difficult to keep up the work without you. Besides, Christian institutions and people as well as others, not only in Kerala, but also in the whole of India, have been benefiting immensely from your unusual gifts. Your presence is needed by our Church. But there is another side to the matter. It is now public knowledge that you have heroically sacrificed a great opportunity by refusing the Emperor. It was in the newspapers also.

They say that you have refused him a dozen times. Everybody admires you for this great sacrifice. We all admire your sacrifice and faith. If, however, this thirteenth time also you refuse him, you will be so proud of your sacrifice, that it will be difficult to live with you. For the sake of your own spiritual welfare and humility, therefore, you should accept the offer of the Emperor. You should go to Ethiopia. That is our unanimous decision."

It was not for me to question the logic of their argument. I had given them and God an undertaking, and my job was only to abide by it. The rest is God's responsibility. So I humbly bowed and accepted their decision, and then we prayed together for some time.

"The Emperor had left Kerala by that time and was back in Delhi. I sent him a telegram accepting his offer. A reply telegram came the next day, asking me to go and see the Emperor again in Calcutta three days later. I promptly went and saw him in Calcutta, a good 3000 kilometers from Alwaye, and he was glad to see me. I remember he gave me three thousand-rupee notes, which denomination of Indian currency I had never seen before, (or, for that matter, any time after), and asked me to get some clothes and other accessories. The air ticket would be sent to me in Kerala. That was that."

"I remember also that the Emperor asked me to stay on with his party for a couple of days. The next day the Emperor went to the races; I accompanied Prince Makonnen. He was keen on betting on the horses. He insisted on my betting too. I remember doing it once, for his sake, staking five rupees and getting back twentytwo. I have never done any betting before or after that."

Varghese had confronted certain problems at Cochin and Trivandrum connected with the visit of Haile Selassie. Therefore, he wrote a letter to Deacon K M Simon, his friend and the President of Ethiopian Orthodox Church Theological Seminary, Addis Ababa sharing certain issues. This letter seen below makes one understand the personality of Paul Varghese as he has revealed his thoughts and wishes in this letter:

November 9, 1956

My dear Semmassen,

I wanted to have a long chat with you at Trivandrum, but you were so busy and I had to come away soon to look after my work here, so it was not possible.

But I have a feeling that our last exchange of words might have led to an estrangement which could have been avoided if we had more time at our disposal. And it is to clarify some of those things that I am writing this letter.

Whether or not I will go to Ethiopia is still somewhat indefinite. The Fellowship House has been kind enough to give me permission to leave for two or three years and I have written to His Imperial Majesty to that effect. I have not had any reply yet.

What I said about the way you treated me at Ernakulam, I really meant. If you had said one of two things, either that such things were not in your power either to recommend or to sanction, or otherwise that you were not interested in my getting to see the Emperor on his coming to Travancore-Cochin, things would have been very easy.

When I came to see you that afternoon, you gave me two pieces of wrong information: (1) that my name had been included along with the members of the Orthodox Church who were to receive the Emperor, and (2) that my pass had already been issued and that I could pick it up from the DSP. On that basis I went to the DSP who told me very rudely that he had no passes to give me, and I had to speak to him very strongly and say that he was not being very helpful when he knew that my name was on the list. Then he said that I had to get a letter from the Chief Engineer before he would issue me a pass. So I went to see the Chief Engineer who blandly told me that the list had already been issued and given to the Collector and that I had to go and see him. Now I had already made two or three trips in search of these officers, and I did not even know who the Collector was. I am not in the habit of running after officers from favours and I felt very much embarrassed. I finally ran into a person who I thought must be the Collector (as he fortunately was) who showed me the list on which my name was not entered at all. I went to the aerodrome in

the hope that something will turn up, and what actually turned up was the DSP who looked daggers at me and asked me to stand me to stand outside the cordon. I am not used to such humiliation, and if you had not told me that my name had been included and that the pass had been issued, I would have dealt with the whole matter in a different way. I hope you understand.

I shall try to be frank wish you. I do sincerely wish that you will be a little more careful about what you say. You are creating a very unfavourable impression about yourself by the careless things that come out of your mouth. Your going about saying that you are a 'Simple Simon' and all that has by no means helped to build up your prestige in the minds of the Ethiopian or Indian officials in the Emperor's party of you will speak less and say what you mean, people may respect you much more than they do.

The way you have been indifferent to the several letters that I sent you while you were in Ethiopia and then the audacity with which you turned up one day without even apologising for your silence with an offer of a job in the theological school there was in very poor taste. You knew jolly well that I was not interested in a big salary. You offered me this job as if you were doing me a great favour out of your love for me. You were rude enough to hint that the work I was doing in Alwaye is quite insignificant. You still do not know anything about what I am doing.

And then on top of all this, you had the cheek to tell me that day in Trivandrum that you had been recommending my name to the Emperor, suggesting perhaps that the offer that the Emperor was making was on the strength of your recommendation. You might as well know that I had twice sent word to the Emperor since his arrival here that I was not available. Even when I talked to His Imperial Majesty, I tried my best to get out of it. If I come now, it will be for a minimum period of time, after which I want to come back to the Fellowship House and my Rs. 75 per month, as I have already told the Emperor.

I am saying all this only to clear up our misunderstandings. I shall be very grateful to you if you will come to Alwaye for a few days here with me. I invite you in all earnestness. You will enjoy the peace

and quiet here after the hectic time that you have had recently. There are so many other things that I would like to explain to you personally.

I am very much interested in the Theological School in Addis Ababa, and would very much enjoy a long discussion with you about it. If I ever come to Addis Ababa, I should even consider taking a few classes at the School, if you would consider it worthwhile. In any case, if I do come to Ethiopia, I must, at any cost, be on the best of terms with you. That is why I am anxious that if we want to call each other names, we should do that here itself. So come, Semmassen, at least for a day, to Alwaye. Thommachen and Joseph Achen and Abraham Achen and your many friends here would be very happy to see you. I will ask my brother Avarachen also to come, if you will let me know when you are coming.

With my love,

Yours affectionately

Travelling and speeches coupled with other official engagements made Varghese too tired. Yet, he found time to reply to letters from his friends. He has narrated his prevailing state of affairs and his desire to start research work for PhD to his letter to Catherine Clement.

Dear Kathryn,

No excuse I can proffer would be sufficient for my failure in sending this form to you on time. Overwork led me to a break-down, and I have been down with nothing more than just fatigue. I am still not too well, and it has not been possible for me to get sufficient rest even during the past month. So I am even this week forced to rest, and breaking my rest to write this letter.

It is not necessary for me to say that it is your fervent prayer and persistent intercession that makes my work fruitful here. I am more than grateful to God and to my brethren and sisters at Calvary for their wonderful love and concern.

I had planned to come back to the States for further study leading towards the Ph.D. degree, so that I can teach in the Theological Seminary here where we can train pastors, but God is now calling

me to a strange new work in a far-off land. I am still unable to give out the details, but I may know more definitely by Christmas time. Please pray fervently that I might always be in the center of the Lord's will.

Hope you and family are keeping good health. May God be with you allways, and bless your labours. May His Kingdom come.

Yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paul Varghese

Conveying his travel to Ethiopia, he wrote a letter to friends Paul and Rose Mary:

Dear Paul and Rosemarie,

It has not been easy not to write to you, for my conscience would have been much clearer if I had written. But life has been unbelievably hectic.

And now things have changed all on a sudden again - this adventure of living for God is truly exciting. Not a dull moment any more.

I am leaving for Ethiopia in two weeks. The details you will get in my mimeographed letter which will come in a few days. The full details even I would know only after I get to Addis Ababa on December 14th.

My services have been loaned to the Ethiopian Emperor (who was here a few weeks ago) by the Fellowship House for a period of three years, with a possible maximum of five years. I would still continue to be associated with the Fellowship House and work here for at least a month every year.

Among other things this takes care of our financial problem for five years, at the end of which period we are hoping that our Rubber plantation will begin to give its yield.

The amount that has accrued from your generous gift this year, is being given for the training of two men who are now in training for the Missionary ministry in our Theological Seminary. I am making arrangements to constitute it properly as a legal trust, and shall soon

send you a copy of the Trust deed. What a great help this is for us we will never be able to express adequately to you.

The job I am going into is a secular job, connected with the national and spiritual development of Ethiopia, but I will work very closely with the Ethiopian Church, which is extremely reactionary. My task is going to be unusually hard. Without your prayer support and that of others, I might collapse. Kindly continue to uphold me.

I am anxious to see a family picture of yours. Do you have a spare one.

May I also convey along with this my most sincere wishes for Christmas joy in your hearts. May His wonderful love come again to build us up and to make us instruments of that same love to reconcile the world unto Himself,

Yours

The Orthodox Theological Seminary organized a farewell function in honor of Paul Varghese who accepted employment at Ethiopia as Liaison Officer with the Personal Staff of Emperor Haile Selassie. Meeting took place at the courtyard adjacent to library beneath the mango tree. Mathews Mar Athanasius, the Principal presided over. Principal and two Teachers of the Seminary spoke a few words expressing thanks to the noble services Varghese rendered to the Seminary.

On behalf of the Seminary, the Principal presented a book to Paul Varghese namely 'Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas. Including selection from his writings' by C F Andrews. On the first page of this book, Mathews Mar Athanasius wrote,

> Affectionately presented to T. Paul Varughese in grateful appreciation of his services for the youths of the church in general and for the Theological Seminary in particular on the eve of his departure to Ethiopia as Liaison Officer.
>
> Dec. 7, 1956 Principal

Coming to know about the new assignment Paul Varghese accepted, many people sent letters to him expressing their

appreciation. Cyril Raj, the then Secretary of Port Trust, Cochin wrote, "Friends who have come to know you personally, naturally rejoice in this, not only because of the position you have been called upon to occupy but also because of the opportunities you will have in abundance for service for Christ."

This letter is a classic example that his friends have understood him in perfection. Varghese had written a letter to all his friends, explaining in detail, the circumstances paving way for a sudden change in his life. This letter is here:

December 1, 1956

My dear Friends,

Things have taken a completely unexpected turn in my life. God's ways are past man's understanding.

I will be leaving this country for Ethiopia in two weeks. I have accepted an assignment as Liaison Officer for the Government of Ethiopia for Indo-Ethiopian development projects. This includes also the fostering of relationships between the churches in India and Ethiopia. My work will be partly in India and partly in Ethiopia.

This has been no easy decision for me, especially in the light of the fact that plans were complete for my being at Yale next Fall.

As you perhaps know, the Ethiopian Emperor has been visiting this country a few weeks ago. He has been requesting me repeatedly for the last six years that I should go back to that country. Six years ago when I left Ethiopia for the States, the pressure was so great that I almost promised, but got away by saying that I would consider if after I had finished my studies in the States.

Then, when I was just about to leave the States, he came to Princeton University, and there asked me to come back. I told him that I had been away from my country for seven years and that I had to go back to India.

When he came here early this month he asked his son, Duke of Harrar to speak to me. I sent word to him that I was going to the States for further study, and could not come now. He then asked the

Cabinet Minister of the Government of India, who was his host in this country, to persuade me to come. I sent word that I had a religious vocation and was not available for secular jobs.

He then met me personally and said that he wanted to talk to me. In the interview that followed I explained to him my reasons. He understood that mine was a problem of vocation. He said that he had no business to say anything further if I said that I had no vocation from God to come to Ethiopia. But he suggested that I must be open to consider whether God was calling me through him. He said that he and his country needed me. I promised to give him a definite reply in a few days after prayerful consideration.

Back at the Fellowship House, the decision was by no means easy. But as we sought together for the will of God, the unanimous decision emerged that the Emperor's presistent request should not be ignored and that his suggestion about this being a call from God should be taken seriously. I was therefore to be loaned to the Ethiopian Emperor for a period of three years with a possible maximum of five years. I could leave in June 1957 when I would have left for the States in any case.

This I communicated to the Emperor who was in New Delhi by that time. He telegraphed back that I should see him again in Calcutta, 1700 miles from here. I flew up there on November 15th. He said that I should not insist on the five-year maximum and must come for my life-time. I replied that this was not in my power, and that I could make no further commitment at this time, I would continue to be an inmate of the Fellowship House and would return there at the end of the period.

He then said that I should come over right away. I pointed out that I had the responsibility for Bible Schools and Conferences in April-May and had to be here at that time. He suggested that I go to Ethiopia now and come back in April. So I leave Bombay on December 14th.

There will be one or two other friends who will devote more time to the work of the Fellowship House. I will be responsible for their support. I will be devoting a major portion of my salary for church

work both at the Fellowship House and outside. The Fellowship House will be my home, both physically and spiritually, and I would return here from time to time.

As you see, the change in my life demands a complete reorganisation of my external life. But if my inner life continues to be grounded in Christ and keeps growing, I know that I shall by no means lack opportunity for serving him both in Ethiopia and in this country. Second only to the work in India, has been my prayer and desire to sow the seed of a new life in the degenerate Ethiopian Church. Knowing as I do that the task is too immense for me, I shall launch forth trusting in His grace and leaning on your prayers.

The work at the Fellowship House will continue to grow even in my absence. That will be my responsibility. So do not give up praying for the work here.

I had begun writing Christmas notes to some of you, but will not be able to get much farther down the list. So will you most generously accept this as a personal note?

I shall not be here at Christmas time, and my temporary address in Ethiopia would be P.O. Box 678, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I will be reaching there on the night of December 14th. I shall write again soon.

May I also wish you, in this season of joy, the precious gift of His indwelling grace. May the wonder and joy of His love flood your hearts and lives. May be blessy you.

Yours in Him

Paul Varghese

Before his leaving for Ethiopia, Malayala Manorama and Church Weekly (1956 December 9) had published reports about Paul Varghese as below:

Mr Paul Varghese to Ethiopia

Alwaye, November 22: Mr Paul Varghese had been associated with the Department of Education of Ethiopian Government in a

manner appreciated by all concerned; he had been in the good books of Emperor Haile Selassie as his committed works caught the attention of the Emperor. From there, he moved over to America, earned his BD graduation from Princeton University, and returned to India to serve at the Fellowship House, Alwaye as its joint secretary. While continuing with this service, Emperor Haile Selassie summoned Varghese to him during his recent official visit to India and exchanged pleasantries. Thereafter, he left a message requesting Varghese to meet him urgently at Calcutta. Accordingly, Varghese met the Emperor at Calcutta where he asked Varghese to accept an assignment to work for him as Liaison Officer at Ethiopia for a period of five years. As such, Mr Varghese is proceeding to Ethiopia on 10 December.

We learn that Emperor has given an assurance to provide necessary infrastructure to establish a Textile Mill in Ethiopia by Birla Group. Emperor is ready to provide all support for opening tea and rubber estates in Ethiopia. Mr Paul Varghese hailing from Tripunithura is aged just 35.

To Ethiopia

As Mr T Paul Varghese BA; BD, a member of the Editorial Board of 'Church Weekly', one of the Secretaries of Fellowship House and the General Secretary of Orthodox Christian Students Movement has accepted the assignment of Liaison Officer of Ethiopia, he is flying to Addis Ababa on this December 12. Paul Varghese was to join Yale Divinity School next year for perusing research studies for earning Doctorate and arrangements including scholarships for the same were in place; it was under such a pre-planned scheme of things, the Ethiopian Emperor paid an official visit to India including Kerala and affectionately forced Paul Varghese to accept his offer of employment. He decided to honor the interests of His Majesty after thoughtfully deciding through prayer.

Mr Paul Varghese hailing from Tripunithura had worked as a Teacher in Ethiopia earlier for three years. After this, he was in America for higher studies at the Princeton University. Following this, he engaged himself actively with the Fellowship House at Alwaye, with the Student Christian Movement, with the Editorial Board of

Church Weekly and as a Teacher at the Orthodox Theological Seminary at Kottayam. He is a top class Theologian and Philosopher and is fluently conversant in seven languages. We take this opportunity to offer all our good wishes to Mr Paul Varghese in taking up his new challenging assignment.

Farewell

A very touching sent off function was there at the Fellowship House with the presence of all the members of Alwaye College Hill parish on December 2. Fr T V John MA; LT presided over the meeting. Mr P C Mathew, Fr C A Abraham and representatives of young boys and girls spoke on the occasion. Paul Varghese gave a heart touching reply.

Church Weekly published an editorial on Paul Varghese having moved to Ethiopia, which reads as below:

Alwaye Fellowship House

An educated Christian young woman raised a question, "Mr Paul Varghese will certainly do Christian service as he had been doing hitherto, wherever he is. But what is the specific purpose behind this establishment called Fellowship House?" We believe that this question is one that passes through many minds of those having heard about Fellowship House through the activities of Paul Varghese as he has left Fellowship House now, albeit temporarily, to accept the assignment of Liaison Officer with the Emperor of Ethiopia.

Recently, there was an informal gathering of friends at fellowship House connected with the foreign journey of Paul Varghese where he narrated the circumstances under which he became a member of Fellowship House. After his studies in America for three or four years, he returned to his native place Tripunithura looking forward to engage himself in some Christian activities. He was not quite sure where to go or meet whom to accomplish his wish; it was then, a former friend of him directed Paul Varghese to Fellowship House. Though seemingly accidental, that visit to Fellowship House opened the path for Paul Varghese to become an active member here. He told some of his friends who came to see him off to Ethiopia, "This

Fellowship House is my home; now I am going away on work to be back here to my brothers and sisters in course of time."

Today we do not have many who are scholarly, intelligent, active and spiritually rich as Paul Varghese in our Syrian Church. It would be worthwhile to perceive the reasons why a man of his caliber placed Fellowship House in a high pedestal in his spiritual life. Christian life has its base in fellowship. "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in Heaven." This divine advice pinpoints the founding principle behind Christianity. However intelligent may individuals be, there are spiritual virtues those cannot be achieved for one unless he is not in fellowship with others. Likewise, there are people who are very ordinary as we see them, yet, they become instruments in the hands of God to accomplish great things through their prayers in fellowship. Individuals may possess weaknesses such as unilaterism, pervasive thoughts and such other traits; Christian fellowships can overcome such negative traits and strengthen them in faith. There are many young men and women keen to offer their lives to serve God, but they are aware of their limitations. Such people may be confused as where to go like Paul Varghese was a couple of years early. Fellowship House is an establishment, which welcomes such people who would be oriented the right way.

The spiritual service late Mr K C Chacko used to carry on in Christian fellowship, centered at Alwaye during his lifetime is well known. Among the multi-phased services rendered by K C Chacko, one was to provide assistance to those who were tired in their hard life, worried about their future or fed up with a static status of their spirituality. He used submit all issues of such people before God in prayers so that they were relieved of their problems and by taking care of them in love and kindness. Though Mr K C Chacko left for heavenly abode, this service has to continue, but is not manageable by a single person. Therefore, with a view to continue such a Christian service, Fellowship House came into being as a memorial to K C Chacko. Though there is a full time Secretary for managing the affairs, things will move forward as envisaged only if there are more people with helping hands. Fellowship House aims at coordinating such

suitable persons informally or even formally and enthuse them in Christian friendship. Church Weekly takes this opportunity to seek suggestions, interceding prayers or any other means of cooperation from its readers so that the service moves forward continuously.

1. D Babu Paul, "*Aluvapuzha Pinneyum Ozhukunnu*", Manorama Sunday, 1996 Dec 8, Page 2.

2. Fr. Paul Varghese, "What the SCM has Meant to Me", *AIKYA*, Volume 8, No. 5, May 1962.

4

With The Lion of Yehuda

Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie had a title, "The Lion of The Tribe of Yehuda." There are many stories in circulation as how did he come to occupy the royal throne; there are many more stories those have not seen light.

In 1913, Menelik, King of Ethiopia expired. Lij Iyasu, the daughter's son of the deceased King, succeeded him. He was a pleasure oriented lazy person. Ethiopian Christians did not favor him as he was showing leniency to Muslims and that there were chances that he would convert to Islam.

There was a revolution against Lij Iyasu organized by the lords of Northern areas of Ethiopia. Haile Selassie came to the forefront as a youth leader of this revolution. His name then was Lij Tafari Makonnen. He had a very distant blood relationship with Lij Iyasu.

His father had eleven children of which only two survived infancy. Six of his brothers died as a boat turned upside down in the lake of Afrera. Tafari escaped from this disaster. His opponents had spread news that Tafari caused the accident to the boat and killed his brothers.

While he was 17, he got an appointment as the Governor of Sidamo province. His education ended up with home tuitions imparted by a Jesuit priest and a few years at school. However, as the people of Ethiopia were comparatively less educated, he could shine among them as glowing sun.

By the time he was 25, he had earned good administrative experience from his assignments as Governors of two provinces for eight years. Moreover, he succeeded in becoming very close with the representative of British Government. He took over the leadership of the Ethiopian Lords and as if for his country and for his religion, dethroned Lij Iyasu. Thereafter he titled Princess, Zewditu daughter of King Menelik as "Queen of Kings" and as her representative, took over the reins of Ethiopia in the capacity as Regent. This was in

1916. In a big insurgence, Tafari assassinated at least 8,000 men of Lij Iyasu to take over the Regency. Only a further five years later, he could capture Iyasu.

In 1917, on the coronation of Zewditu, there was the proclamation that Tafari would inherit the Throne. However, he had no chance to be elevated for the next twelve years. He utilized this period to learn all the tricks of the game, positives and negatives. His outlook was modern. Aged conservative Lords were the advisors and cronies of Zewditu. It is not surprising that they were sharply against the modern ideologies of Tafari. Those days, a Coptic Metropolitan who oversaw the Ethiopian Orthodox Church too could not appreciate the modern ideologies for development.

Despite this conservatism, Tafari succeeded in overcoming their strategies and opposition to lay the foundation of modern education in Ethiopia; he could also send many youngsters to Europe to get educated. For many of them, Tafari used his personal money to meet expenses. He had a high regard for modern and Western education.

In 1920, even a safety pin was not available in Ethiopian markets. Almost all the buildings were made of mud and wood. In the whole of Ethiopia, there was just one car, and that was a gift to the Empress from Italian government.

Consequent to the efforts initiated by Lij Tafari, foreign engineers came to Ethiopia and constructed buildings made of stones. Cars, dress material in European fashions and books in foreign languages made their entry into Ethiopia. Two hospitals were established. Foreign missionaries too came in good numbers. Renovations introduced in jails made them more stay worthy. Lij Tafari worked hard against the system of slavery and managed to contain it to a good extent.

Tafari conducted a European tour in 1924. He realized that for the development of Ethiopia, western culture must come in. As he was conversant in French language, he could bring in many innovations and implement them in Ethiopia. Ethiopia joined League of Nations in 1923. This enabled him to understand the political strategies of the whites somewhat. He learned to some extent how to confront it.

Italy, France and Britain were the big powers then. All these three had interests in Ethiopia. Tafari learnt how to exploit situations to his favor by causing misunderstandings among these three powers. However, his challenge was opposition within his own country.

His main adversary was Lord Balcha, Governor of Sidamo province. Tafari summoned him to Addis Ababa, but he did not turn up. However on the warning that his backing out would warrant action against him, he came to the capital accompanied by 10,000 odd soldiers. He did not enter the city, but camped some eight miles away where he had his own residence. It looked like a scenario for an insurgence.

Regent Tafari invited Balcha to the Royal Palace for a banquet. He committed to attend provided he could bring 500 of his bodyguards with him. Tafari gave his consent.

It was a grand banquet. Food and drink were royal and abundant. Tafari and Balcha had an intense argument with no concurrence on any of the issues. Balcha suddenly took leave saying, "We have nothing in common; only a straight armed fight can end up things one way or other."

However, Balcha found his entire company of soldiers disappeared when he returned home. While the banquet was in progress, loyalists of Tafari met these soldiers with attractive gifts and disbursed them to their own villages. They returned and with this, the discordance with Balcha ended.

He had an uncanny knack to use these types of strategies as and when needed. It is no wonder to confront those people surviving with tricks in their own coin.

There was another incident in 1928. Tafari was Regent then (His name Haile Selassie was a later innovation). The Empress Zewditu was not a capable one. The Regent was managing the affairs of governance of the nation on his own.

As usual, one day, Tafari left his personal palace and entered the Royal Palace of the Empress. As soon as he made his entry, he found all the doors closed behind him. Armed soldiers took guard of

each of the exit doors. Outside, another batch of soldiers were ready with cannons.

Inside, Empress accompanied by her cronies were present. She asked Regent Tafari, "I am hearing that you are planning to dethrone me to become Emperor; is it true?"

Tafari immediately understood that the source of such allegations against him were the creations of these Lords standing either side of the Empress. Inside the room, palace guards had their guns pointed to him. The cronies had advised the Empress to arrest Tafari and put him in the jail or hang him.

Tafari was least perplexed. He convinced the Empress logically that all allegations raised against him were baseless and senseless. He, then, confronted the guards whose guns were still targeting him.

He commanded them loudly, "Keep your guns on your shoulders and open the doors." His orders to the guards were in pure military style authoritatively, but calm and quiet. In pin drop silence, the guards obeyed him and opened the doors. In a composed posture, Tafari left the palace. By this time, his wife Princess Mennen, who became Empress later, had summoned soldiers loyal to them and assembled them outside the Royal Palace.

Tafari came out with a Royal calmness on his face and coolly mounted his pony and without any hurry, moved to his palace quietly. No firing was there, not even a single shot. People gathered there were surprised. What prevailed there was not military power, but the guts of a young man.

After two days, coronation of Tafari Makonan as Emperor Haile Selassie[1] took place; at early 6:00 am, the simple function took place without any pomp. Empress Zewditu herself removed the throne from her head and placed it on the head of Tafari. All the Lords who were keeping enmity with him welcomed the new Emperor in traditional style.

One Lord stood against, who was defeated in fight, and died. This is the basic nature of the character of Haile Selassie. He had immense

courage and confidence in himself; he could take right decisions at the right time in split second and execute them.

Emperor Haile Selassie was a shining star in World History who was highly intelligent and extremely capable. He was a person about whom Varghese had high regards even during his school days. Now Varghese got an unusual opportunity to work with one whom he adored for the last couple of decades.

Analyzing the disciplined pattern of life Emperor Haile Selassie was practicing and about His Majesty's character, Metropolitan says, "I saw him for the first time in 1947. He would have been 56 then, was lean and not very tall. However, the splendor in his eyes would make anyone bow his head before His Majesty. He came to power in 1917. In thirty years, he overpowered all his enemies and earned respect of his citizens; the splendor in his eyes was a semblance of such courage and strength."

"He was the Emperor; had enough wealth. Yet, he followed a simple living style. He had no evil habits; he did not smoke; he did not resort to consumption of wine or intoxicating drinks. He practiced a disciplined way of living. He was very particular to follow religious rituals promptly. During the period of Lent, he fasted until 4:00 pm. Even during his fasting days, he would be attending his office from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. After this, he attended Church worship and only after that, took food. Along with his simple way of life, his ethical discipline and his philanthropic feelings, he had his weakness of corruption in money dealings; at the end, I think, this was the reason for his failure."

"During a Lent period, there was an interesting incident. His family was anxious about his health as he was very strict in observance of Lents. This is common in many families; those who love us force us to consume more food than what we need and ultimately, damage our health. Even the Empress desired that His Majesty leave for office in the morning consuming at least a lemon. She too was very strict to observe the rituals of Lent. But no one had the courage to present this before His Majesty."

"One day after His Majesty left for his office, all family members gathered together; they decided to make Jan Hoi (this is a name used by those who were very close to him) eat something. They were not sure of a suitable means for this. Some suggestions came up; one amicable proposal was a petition signed by all family members addressed to him. It is a big family of three sons and one daughter with all their own children and adopted children. However, the grown up sons or daughter were not having enough courage to make such a direct move. There were eleven grandchildren. Among them, Prince Paul aged 11 was the eldest. At the end of these deliberations, a team of grandchildren under the leadership of Prince Paul proceeded to the Emperor's office and after obtaining permission from the Secretary, entered His Majesty's office at the allotted time."

"Emperor was very fond of grand children. Traces of his humane characteristics used to reveal when spending time with them talking or playing. However, this meeting was at His Majesty's official chamber. The delegation came to the Emperor and bowed before him touching the floor. Emperor asked, 'What is your problem?' Representing the team, Prince Paul said, 'We have a very humble petition.' Elders of the family had prepared the matter and coached Prince Paul to present them systematically. Paul succeeded in presenting the issue in beautiful Amharic: 'We submit before Your Majesty that Your Majesty be pleased to eat at least half a grape fruit during the days of Lent.' His Majesty replied, 'Your petition has made me happy. I know, this petition has come up from you, as you love me sincerely. As a token of my joy, I am giving my decision on your petition right now: from today, I permit my grandchildren to eat not half, but one whole grapefruit during the season of Lent. You may take leave now.' His Majesty wound up with a cute smile. He knew how to deal with others with compassion without compromising his own self belief."

"Emperor Haile Selassie did not value those who did not possess self-belief and internal strength. After my ordination as a priest, I went to meet him one day and he was a bit angry that I was gaining body weight. He said, 'If you do your fasting correctly and observe your Lents the right way with regularly kneeling down during prayers,

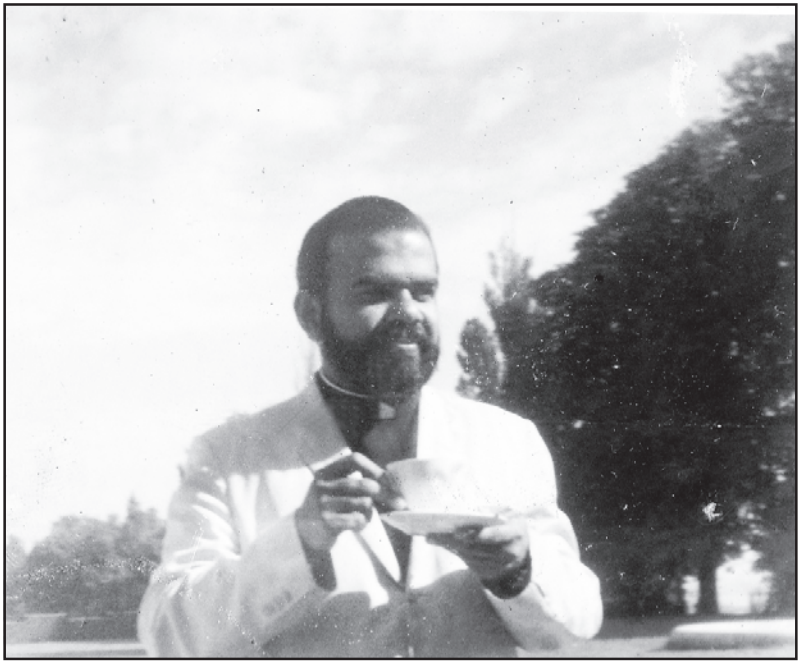
you will not grow fatty like this and your belly will not jump out.' He had high regards for Pope Paul VI. The reason was that the Pope was not fatty on body shape and that he was a man of prayers and internally very strong with self-belief. I do not know how much Charles de Gaulle was praying, but his inner faculties were very strong. Such inner strength was the strong point of Haile Selassie also."

"Haile Selassie was one who had undergone the vagaries of poverty and the comfort of prosperity alike. Very few people had experienced the depth of tribulations and pinnacle of glory like this man. When Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, Haile Selassie had to live the life of a beggar in Europe. Once adored like God, even beggars in the streets of Addis Ababa treated him with contempt during his later years which was heart breaking to those who knew him. Who was Haile Selassie? Was he a splendorous star in world history and an intellectual giant who was an extra ordinary man of governance? Alternatively, was he a notorious cheat who exploited his people by diverting their hard-earned savings to European banks and closed his eyes seeing people dying on the streets in poverty? Before making any evaluation of Haile Selassie, it is necessary to collect all details about his deeds as a ruler. As of now, what I can do is to express my personal opinion about him based on what I have understood, albeit partly, about him."

"In any man, good and evil would be present together. It is a big blunder to infer that a man is very good and that there are no traces of evil in him. I have no doubt that even in men who excel in capabilities and compassion would have shortcomings in their other areas. I have come across many men of greatness, but I could not find anyone who is incorrupt wholly. I could not identify any human who is blameless apart from Jesus Christ, the Messiah; I could not find any such person even among the Apostles or among our Fathers whom we respect as saints."

* * * * * * *

As invited by the Emperor, Paul Varghese reached Addis Ababa on 1956 December 14. On 16 December, he met the Emperor who was at his resort at Ambo and had discussions for half an hour. The



Emperor, during this discussion, expressed his happiness at the warm reception he received in India, particularly in Kerala. He told Varghese that he had a high opinion of the developments in India, but what he witnessed was far exceeding what he had in his mind. On December 20, Varghese paid a visit again to the Emperor at his Royal Palace. He took charge as the Indian Liaison Officer on 21 December at his office within the palace.[2]

After resuming his new assignment, Varghese prepared a circular like letter to all his friends explaining his activities:

Dear Friends,

This year I was not able to write a personal note to many of you even at Christmas. But the readiness with which many of you have responded to my multiple letters reassures me of your genuine friendship and affection for me. Many of your Christmas greetings went to India and are now being forwarded here.

You probably want to know what I am doing here. I work here in

the Private Secretariat of His Imperial Majesty Haile Sellassie I Emperor of Ethiopia.

I am his private secretary in matters relating to Indian Relations and Education in Ethiopia. I also assist the chief Private Secretary as a consultant. My office is inside the palace.

My religious work is on my own initiative, and is being slowly built up now. We have an English Bible Class in my home every Sunday, when about 25 to 30 well-educated Indian Christians gather together and study the Gospel of John. I will also soon begin to teach at the Theological School of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. I hope to begin other small study groups after I have made my trip to India in April - May.

I hope to be at the Fellowship House by the middle of April, and will be taking part in the Holy Week Retreat, the Students' Conference (200 students in conference for five days) and the Bible School (20-25 Christian High School and College teachers in residence at the F.H. for four weeks). Please pray for all these, and also for my work here.

I should be back in Ethiopia by the first week of June, about which time I shall write to you again. Thank You so much for your friendship and kind remembrance. May God bless you and keep you.

In Him

Paul Verghese

After reaching Ethiopia, Varghese attempted to transform his inner feelings on paper, but that ended incomplete. Let us have a look at this incomplete note: "My first visit after reaching this land was to a hospital. Three persons from our place were there as inpatients. Two of them were suffering from injuries in a recent bus accident. The other one was undergoing treatment for some serious illness associated with his internal systems for about six weeks.

Based on my visiting those patients, certain thoughts came up in my inner self, which I thought of transcribing on paper. May be your feelings too may align with those of mine.

My first thought is about the relation between wealth and joy. These patients, all the three working as teachers, are drawing Rs 1,000/- a month, which would be as much as ten times what they would have received at home. Nevertheless, does their joy multiply in the same proportion? I am sure, it is not so. They may not enjoy a social status here as they do enjoy far away at home. I observe that many of them are not happy in mind as they confront deceases and even other dangers in their life here. May be, they address these issues without fear as they are well off financially. At the same time, they are ruled by a thought, 'I have with me whatever I need; I do not need others to meet my requirements.' Consequently, even the sense of cooperation among them is slowly vanishing. Here, we see wealth as something that hampers social solidarity.

With the disappearance of this solidarity, an individual is confronting stress that causes difficulties in life. The thought that each one among us should learn to take care of oneself may be a catalyst for the development of humankind to a good extent; but the internal contentment a man experiences in a social life gets spoiled through the very same thought."

Varghese wrote a letter to his friends about his new circumstances and experiences:

January 11, 1957

Dear Sunday School Class:

I wanted to write to you earlier and tell you about the new developments in my life. I hope some of you at least have seen the multiple letter that I sent out at Christmas time regarding the steps which led me to take the decision to come to Ethiopia.

Here I am now employed at the Private Secretariat of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, as an additional Private Secretary. It is a very responsible and influential position, and there can be wonderful opportunities of witnessing to the wonder and glory of the Love of God in Jesus Christ.

Now that I have left India, it does not mean that I am no longer associated with the work of the Fellowship House. You can continue

to pray both for the work of the Fellowship House and for my work here. I do need your prayers very much because of the many temptations amidst which I live. But even more is the need for the prayer support of all my friends for the work of the Fellowship House. It has been because of prayer like yours that that place has been showing the light of Christ to many for the past year or two. Please continue to pray for the work there.

I will be going back to the Fellowship House to teach at our summer Bible School even though it would cost me U.S. $ 1000 to do so. Summer Bible School usually begins the week after Easter. If you want to help the school, you can always send your contributions to the Revd. C. A. Abraham, Bursar, Alwaye Fellowship House, U.C. College P.O., Alwaye, Kerala, India. No money should be send to me in future, but should be sent to the Revd. Abraham who has taken my place.

I am more grateful than ever for your continued interest in my work and in my country, and shall continue to depend on your prayers. May the Lord Jesus Christ bless each one of you as you seek to obey Him and to labour in His vineyard.

Yours in Him

His close friends had their own viewpoints about the sudden turn of events in the life of Varghese. We get some idea of their feelings through a letter from one of his good friends in the below quoted relevant portion there form: “Africa! Oh Paul, I cannot believe it or accept it graciously. I did so want you to return to the United States. I must admit I am selfishly disappointed at your appointment. But what a marvelous appointment. Paul, Rev. Parker has said so many times that you would have a brilliant career and one that the world would know of. Is this the beginning? you must have suffered great anxiety trying to arrive at a decision as to what to do. You were so strongly urged, surely after consulting with God, your decision must be right. I know you dislike leaving India for your sentiments for your country have always been so great. Surely your heart is saddened to be departing from the work you so loved but Paul, as your letter said, your spiritual self will be in India with the Fellowship House. Your work will go on while you go on to another country taking God with

you. I shall pray ever harder that your life will continue to be profitable in the name of the Lord."

Though a member of Emperor's Private Secretariat, Varghese did not have any authority worth mentioning. He had one privilege that any moment, he could step into the chamber of the Emperor. In case, any matter needed His Majesty's attention, Varghese had just to note down on a paper and send it to the Emperor through his personal peon. It would reach His Majesty in half an hour. Most of the things Varghese recommended used to be agreeable to him. However, His Majesty did not seek advice from Varghese in issues those were too crucial. For example, recommendations to increase democratic freedom of people or suggestions to modify ownership laws of landed properties would not find favorable response. Yet, pieces of advice on innovations in the system of education or introduction of new methodologies for social uplift would move to concerned ministries immediately. Occasionally, orders would come out even with no consultation with the concerned ministers. Notwithstanding these, the authority Varghese possessed was too limited.

The Emperor gave some hints regarding the responsibilities Paul Varghese had to undertake. Foremost among them was to oversee the new programs related to Indo - Ethiopian cooperation. He had great appreciation for the development programs in India; the Emperor regarded Jawaharlal Nehru very highly. He wanted to broaden this relationship with India. His Majesty was of the view that the Indian model suited Ethiopia better than western models. Present assignment for Varghese was to look after three programs commenced very recently. These three programs were (1) setting up Military Academy at Harare (under the officials of Armed Forces of India with Brigadier Rowley at its helm), (2) Textile Mill in cooperation with Birla and (3) India - Ethiopia Trade Agreement under process. There were a few advisors coming from India. Senior ICS officer Ramachandran Nair was to take care of Community Development Programs and John Barnabas, a well-known social activist from Delhi was to look after social affairs. His Majesty hinted that Varghese might have to recruit a few more in the days ahead.

Haile Selassie with Coptic Orthodox Pope, HH Kyrillos VI.

Haile Selassie with Greek Orthodox Bishop, Armenian Orthodox Bishop, Ethiopian Orthodox Priest and Greek Orthodox Priest.

Haile Selassie with H.H. Pope Kyrillos VI in Orthodox Christian Liturgy. The deacon in the front would be later known as Bishop Mina Ava Mina.

Cordial relationship with India was turning out to be a crucial element in Ethiopia's foreign policy. Varghese had to back up as the Liaison Officer of all such programs. Liaison Officer was one who should coordinate different segments in these sorts of programs. Varghese had to work in tandem with Niranjan Singh Gill, Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia and with Raas Imru, Ethiopian Ambassador at New Delhi. His assignment had no direct relationship with any of the ministries in Ethiopian government. However, direct contact had to be with His Majesty. Varghese had to be in formal touch with the office of His Majesty's Private Secretary and with the 'PEN' ministry. In their first discussion itself, His Majesty had specified certain things, "There are certain personal services you have to manage for me." Varghese understood later that these were a variety of services. These were purchases of crockery items from abroad such as knives, spoons, forks, jars, clay vessels etc for the Royal palace. In addition, these included reading and drafting replies for letters addressed to His Majesty and studying the programs under US aid like construction of a Highway in Ethiopia. Varghese also had to prepare drafts for the speeches His Majesty was to deliver and had to work out precise versions of long English speeches in Amharic; he had to provide advice on improvising educational systems and implementing social reformations and so on.

"Sometimes when he comes back from a trip abroad, he would give me a few books in English and ask me to read and summarise them in Amharic. Once when he came back from one of his frequent trips to visit his friend Marshall Tito in Yugoslavia, he brought back a book banned in Yugoslavia, by the opponent of Tito, former Yugoslavian Vice-President Milovan Djilas, entitled *The New Class*. I wondered how he got hold of the book. It was an indictment, not only of Tito, but of the whole Communist system, rather precocious for that time, i.e., 1956-57. Djilas was arguing that Communism may have succeeded in eliminating the propertied class of Capitalism, but had in fact only replaced that class with the new Bureaucratic Upper Class of Communist systems, which were more ruthless, oppressive and undemocratic than Capitalist bosses."

"Another book he brought with him on one occasion, I remember,

was Anton Makarenko's *The Road to Life*, a remarkabe work by a Russian Communist educationist about how to rehabilitate social renegades and criminals by giving them limited responsibilities within an accepting and non-threatening community. It was a deviation from Lenin's wife Anna Krupskaya's views on Socialist education, but I thought they had relevance for Ethiopia (remembering my own experience with the boys in Jimma). The Emperor was pleased with my summaries, and told me that even in Communism, if you could remove the poisonous elements, there were some very good things. The ideas were passed on to the Ministry of Education, but nothing came of it in the end, it seems."

During his Indian tour, Emperor Haile Selassie had discussions with Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India. The Emperor got impressed very much with Nehru. He used to talk a lot about Nehru after this visit. "Nehru is a great man. India is moving forward like this only because of his leadership qualities. We must sustain our relationship with India and enhance our dealings. This is one of your important tasks." His Majesty briefed Paul Varghese like this. At that time four projects which were of significance had commenced.

First of these projects were re establishing the Ethiopian Military Academy in tune with modern times. For this, Varghese had chosen a Brigadier from India. He was Brigadier Rowley, who later retired as a General. He developed the Academy in an excellent manner. He was one who did everything most systematically. He had the permission to meet the Emperor directly for sorting out various issues. Even there were relaxations in some of the protocol procedures for this. Rowley organized this establishment as an Academy of Defense Ministry and placed the Academy under the direct control of His Majesty. During these days, Varghese used to visit the Academy frequently. Brigadier Rowley also was meeting Varghese very often.

The second project was setting up a Cotton Textile Mill afresh. Birla started this based on a contract with that company. Raw cotton was available in Ethiopia. Using this cotton, manufacturing of clothes started. However, after a while, government nationalized the company.

The third project was to establish a 'nation' or colony for the King

of Faridkot in India with his people within Ethiopian territories; such an establishment would be under the Emperor of Ethiopia. If adequate land and permission to re establish his kingdom was pleasing to the Emperor, the King promised, he would shift to Ethiopia with his subjects. His Majesty very much liked to have an Indian King under him. However, Varghese understood that this King was a luxury-oriented man with his priority in life to drinking; he was immoral in his way of life. He was looking forward to be among women and wine all the while. He wished he could buy land as he pleased and live to his choice in Ethiopia.

"His majesty told me that he was quite pleased with the proposal of the King of Faridkot. The King would be a dependent of the Emperor. The project envisaged importing Indians in large numbers and establishing a dependent nation within Ethiopia. At the end, even I had a role to torpedo this project. I was not at all appreciative of the character and truthfulness of this King of Faridkot. The strategy of the King was to regain his kingdom at least in Ethiopia, which he lost in India with the concept of Independent India gaining ground with small provincial kingdoms submitting their loyalty and everything to the Republic of India. Yet, Haile Selassie was very keen to have an Indian King dependent on him. Even if such wish was there, in my opinion, such a person should be useful to both India and Ethiopia. My thoughts were very clear that one who had priorities set on exploiting women and choosing evil ways in everything was not worth encouraging. This king of Faridkot tried to influence me to his maximum. But, with my clean conscience, it was not possible for me to favor that."

Varghese opposed this project strongly. He never perceived any positives in this. He discussed this with many others including Indian Ambassador and they all concurred with Varghese. The King of Faridkot tried to influence Varghese by offering him many gifts. Yet, he stood firm in his stand. Varghese openly submitted before His majesty, "The Kingdom of Your majesty would confront many issues those were not here so far; many of their dealings would pose challenges to the Ethiopian culture. Therefore, my considerate and strong view is that we should not have this project."

Varghese submitted a memorandum to His Majesty evaluating the project and explaining his views in the matter:

Memorandum - Secret

From

T. Paul Verghese

To

His Excellency the Minister of Pen

Your Excellency,

May I be permitted to submit the following regarding the Raja of Faridkot with whom negotiations are reported to be in progress regarding the development of a considerable area of Ethiopian land under his responsibility:

I admit to two serious drawbacks in this memorandum: first, that I have not seen the previous correspondence on the subject, and two, that my information is only gathered from hearsay and has to be verified from other reliable sources.

I have heard from reliable Indian sources that:

a. the Raja does not love his own country India and is anxious to leave it since he is only an ordinary citizen of India without special privileges.

b. his main concern is to take his money out of India and settle in a place where he is likely to have special privileges and high honours as he used to have while ruling Faridkot.

c. his administration of Faridkot was not outstanding and his people are not generally very fond of him.

d. the Government of India is not likely to take any responsibility regarding him.

e. his personal character is open to serious question and charges of profligacy have been made about him, which lead one to suspect

that he may not be completely successful in developing the area allotted to him.

I believe it is in the province of the responsibility given to me by His Imperial Majesty to make a few recommendations:

a. If any agreement is to be entered into with the Raja it should be only for a period of 30 years with the explicit condition that he would be prepared to leave the land with all the settlers on payment of an adequate compensation for the improvements effected by him.

b. The Raja shall be subject to the laws of the Empire and shall claim no more privileges before the law than any other citizen of India would normally have. He shall not be exempted from the Income tax laws of the Empire neither shall the settlers whom he is likely to bring from Faridkot be exempted from the Immigration laws of the Empire.

c. The Raja shall not demand any subsidy or other financial help from the Imperial Government of Ethiopia.

d. After the first five years during which the return from the land are likely to be offset by the heavy capital expenditure, the Raja shall be required to pay a nominal annual rent of ETH. $ 10,00,000 for the use of the land.

e. The Raja and the settlers on his estate shall be entitled to the protection and assistance of the Imperial Ethiopian Police.

Respectfully submitted

Paul Verghese

Addis Ababa
January 21, 1957. T.

The Emperor heeded to the views of Varghese and declined the project. Intimation from His Majesty went to Faridkot stating that the subject project was not possible. The reason why this project did not take place goes to the credit of the firm stand taken by Varghese.

The fourth project was setting up a Secret Service in Ethiopia maintaining high standards. His Majesty wanted Varghese to choose

Haile Selasssie addressing The League of Nations

Haile Selasssie with Queen Elisabeth

six Police Officers from India for this. Varghese came to India, interviewed some persons serving in the Police Department and selected six. Most of them were from Kerala and they took leave from service to move over to Ethiopia. The team included P O Joy, Thomas and Venugopal. With them, a Secret Service came into place, but that was not very successful for the reason that the Indians found it very difficult to learn the local language as also to adjust to the Ethiopian way of life. Though Secret Service was there as a permanent establishment, these six personnel could not survive there for long. Most of them returned after three years.

P O Joy, a native of Chengannur was serving with Madras Police Department. After returning from Ethiopia, he continued in service and after retirement, joined MRF as Security Officer. He recalls, "We, who were from Kerala, used to play cards during our free time and Paul Varghese used to join us occasionally. In between, he used to get up and go. Not seeing him for some time, we used to go after him to find sitting elsewhere and reading books."

His Majesty accepted a set of guidelines Varghese worked out for recruiting teachers; accordingly, orders were issued and recruitment of teachers were in line with those guidelines thereafter. However, Varghese did not personally interview teachers for appointment.

"I chose an ICS Officer Balachandran and took him to Ethiopia. Later, he became Chief Secretary with the Government of Karnataka. He was extremely efficient. After working for about a year and half, Balachandran returned to India. Likewise, I recruited one John Barnabas, a North Indian, who was a well-known Social Scientist. It was my responsibility to recruit Officers for various ministries and such other crucial posts. For this, I used to visit Delhi and on such occasions, paid visits to Kerala also."

Varghese had his office inside the palace compound; this had a name Duke Beith, or Duke's House. Public had no entry there, which was quite close to Emperor's office and his palace.

Within a few days, Seblewengel Desta, 26-year-old granddaughter

of Emperor paid a visit to Paul Varghese. She introduced herself in flawless English and informed Varghese that her grandfather had asked her to serve him as his Private Secretary. Her English was extremely good. She returned to Ethiopia recently after spending 17 years in different educational institutions in England and earning her graduation. She could speak Amharic bit by bit, but could not read or write. Seating arrangements were in place for her at the office, but there was not much work to do. She could not handle Amharic and all the notes Varghese had to put up before His Majesty were to be in Amharic. After a few weeks, Emperor enquired with a splendor in his eyes, "How is your new Secretary?" Varghese gave a tactful reply, "She is a wonderful woman, Your Majesty. She is quite capable. Her English language is excellent. She is extra ordinarily talented. She is knowledgeable and intelligent. Yet, there is one issue that she does not have any knowledge of Amharic."

"Oh! That is not an issue at all", His Majesty replied, "You can teach her Amharic as and when you get time." The splendor in his eye was still there. Varghese was 34 then, an eligible bachelor. She was 26, sharp minded and matured. Varghese understood what His Majesty had in mind. He was planning to accept Varghese as his grandson in law and to the Majesty's palace.

"I saw later that Seble had understood the point too. I liked her, but marriage was far from my thoughts at that time. Her own religious convictions did not go very much beyond ordinary nominal membership in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and a little touch of personal faith received from her devout grandfather. But I could not for the life of me think of marrying a princess. I had to work with the poor, and I would not fit into an Imperial family. I decided internally to resist the pressure, trusting in God."

"Sybil could feel the inner resistance I was putting up. I have no reason to think that she felt very much attracted to me; in any case I gave her no opportunity to express any personal feelings. I hope she did not feel rejected either; I have no way of knowing. She later married an Ethiopian aristocrat, who became the President of Haile Sellassie University, and was, alas, in one of the riots, killed by the

rebels. She had children also. I myself remained single, puritan. She continued to work a little longer in the office of the Private Secretary, but soon gave up. I was given a new male secretary."

Varghese was residing outside the palace compound and therefore, it was not difficult to entertain guests. Had he been staying within the compound of the palace, this would not have been possible. Varghese had a car, driver, a domestic servant, a cook and a guard, all provided by the government. His quarters was a four bed-room house not far from the palace; this was not meant for higher class staff of the government, but sufficient for Varghese and for him, it was a luxury compared with his earlier accommodations.

One of the first things Varghese did was to commence a Bible Class at his house, arranged as a regular program on weekdays. Many of the Western Missionaries, some Ethiopians and some Indians joined these sessions. As days progressed, the number of classes increased to eight; there used to be occasional exhortations too. These classes were at different locations of the city, at colleges, at houses and so on. Further, there were two weekly exhortations about religious linked topics at the University College, Addis Ababa. People from many occupations regularly attended these.

"St. Paul's Hospital"

There was a serious bus accident at the Northern part of Ethiopia; this was close to Varghese resumed his new assignment. The casualties included many Indian teachers and families. Some of them lost their lives while others seriously injured. There were wide talks about one Kunjoonjamma from Kerala whose husband died and she had multiple fractures and 22 stitches. They had a four-month-old child also. Weather was very cold then and it was nighttime when the bus slipped off the road from a high elevation. This child wrapped in clothes detached from the clutches of its mother and rolled down the slope. It was stuck on a tree and the rescue volunteers located the child after 12 hours of the accident. Child though alive was not showing any response to anything. It was not accepting any food. Nobody there succeeded in making the child respond. It was just staring sharply. Doctors worked hard to ensure that the child survived

the trauma.

The Emperor came to the hospital and visited all those who survived the accident and were under treatment; he made all possible attempts to receive at least a small smile from that child which was taken care separately. He could not succeed. The Doctors explained to His Majesty the traumatic situation the child was in and that only mother's love can retrieve it to normalcy. Immediately, His Majesty ordered one of the nursing staff at his palace to take care of this infant.

That 55-year-old nurse tried her level best to enliven the child and dedicated her hours totally for this. She succeeded to relieve child from its trauma after her hard work for three days. In the meantime, the mother of that infant regained conscience, but had her body covered in bandage completely. The child had no response towards its mother as it saw her. Only the affectionate care of that nurse could enliven it. His Majesty used to visit this child frequently at the hospital and occasionally share his feelings with Varghese.

After a few months of treatment, its mother could leave the hospital. Yet, she had to use crutches because her legs and hips were still under plaster. She had to tender her baby also who was showing no responses to her affectionate caressing. There came up a problem as to where would she stay until such time she can independently take care of herself. This would take a few months. Since she had nowhere to go, Varghese took her to his quarters, mother, child and the nurse. In the meantime, Nanu who was a teacher hailing from Kerala too could leave the hospital after treatment. He too could not walk on his own and was on crutches. Varghese accepted Nanu too into his quarters. Thus, Varghese had his dwelling place filled with people. People used to call it "St Paul's Hospital." Visitors were coming all the while and it was an open facility. However, Varghese would not be there during daytime. He was busy with his office routine and the evening Bible classes.

The child grew up in the quarters of Varghese as a normal boy. Later, he went to India to complete his High School education and joined Madras Christian College for graduation. While he was 25, he had an over doze of sleeping pills to end his life. It was a heart breaking

experience for the Metropolitan who attended his funeral service.

Paul Varghese reached Kerala in April 1957. He was among the leaders at the Vacation Bible classes arranged at the Fellowship House, Alwaye and at the annual conference of the Orthodox Students Movement. Those were the days when the factional feuds within the Malankara Church were at their climax. HH Geevarghese II Bava longed for lasting peace in the Church to be in place before His Holiness breathed last. His Holiness directed Paul Varghese to convey this to HH Yakob III Patriarch unofficially and seek response. Varghese travelled to Damascus and collected the requisitioned information. Since he was the Private Secretary the Emperor of Ethiopia, he could travel to Syria and return without depending on anyone.

Response from HH Yakob III was favorable and Varghese conveyed this to Catholicos. The consensus among the leadership was to work out the modalities and reach a settlement during the lifetime of HH Catholicos. The informal understanding was that Daniel Mar Philoxenos and Paul Varghese should go to Damascus and arrive at a formula to end up the factional fighting once for all. HH The Catholicos expressed his concurrence.

However, His Holiness directed Paul Varghese to be present in the Holy Synod that had to give a formal approval to the above proposal. In this Synod, Paul Varghese should explain the propriety of a delegation including one member from the laity going to Damascus and the members of the Holy Synod get convinced of the initiation of steps to arrive at a settlement.

"During those days, meetings of Holy Synod were not so regular. Whenever there used to be matters of urgency warranting approval or guidance of Synod, they used to assemble. Members of Holy Synod too were very few then. If my memory is correct, apart from HH The Catholicos, Augen Mar Thimothiose (Later, HH Baselios Augen I Catholicose), Thoma Mar Dionysius, Parettu Mathews Mar Ivaniose and Daniel Mar Philoxenos were those who were present. Mathews Mar Athanasius (Later HH Baselios Mathews I Catholicose) could not attend. Utilizing my limited inputs and knowledge, I tried my best

Haile Selassie with Family

to make the Metropolitans present understand the matter in detail. Like an Advocate, I explained the advantages we have in sending a delegation now and the pros and cons if we do not send a delegation at this stage."

Immediately, there was no response from anyone. After a while, one of the Metropolitans present there addressed Varghese and told him, "What you had explained here is absolutely correct word by word. The pros and cons you explained here are true to its best. Accordingly, sending a delegation to the Patriarch at this stage is good in all respects. However, what we say is this: this delegation need not go now. I do not want to say the reason behind this. There would be good reasons for that. Therefore, Paul Varghese need not say anything further."

It was a strange experience for Paul Varghese. Inexperienced in Church politics, he did not understand the essence of what happened. HH The Catholicos presiding over the Holy Synod shouted, "No, it is not possible with me. It is difficult that this comes in order."

Not only that His Holiness said these, he immediately left the place. Later, Varghese came to know that there were differences of opinion as to who all should form the delegation. Anyhow, nobody went and cancelled the flight tickets.

It pained Varghese that HH The Catholicose who was earnestly praying for restoration of peace in the Church was disappointed. He recalled the Catholicose telling very often that the selfishness of men was the cause of unrest in Church.

* * * * * * *

To a question whether Ethiopian opening commenced with people from Kerala landing there, Metropolitan replied:

"One cannot say like that. Ethiopian opening had started right from 1947. The country marched forward from 1947 through various development programs. It is just that during the days I was there, many important activities began. There were objections from local people against too much representation allowed to Indians. Nevertheless, our people worked pretty well there; Balachandran

and Barnabas were officers of good qualities. However, these people found it difficult to align with the bureaucracy there. To get something done there, the note has to be in Amharic. There would be no one even to read a note in English. There was nothing of the sort of systematic bureaucracy as we have in India. They followed a pattern of work where officers and ministers attended office and did work, as they found convenient to them. Most of the important matters came to the Emperor who looked into them and passed necessary orders. Even for a very simple and ordinary project, the Emperor had to put his signature. I saw this as the biggest obstacle in the system of governance. All the ministers used to be present at the palace by 9:30 every day. They could not to enter into the palace. They either would wait at an adjoining room or in good weather wait at the nearby garden chit chatting until the Emperor called them. This was their daily routine and we named it 'Sunshine Club.' The custom prevailed there was that there was no need to attend office, but simply wait there. Prime Minister and all other ministers did the same. Waiting like this, memorandum went inside and if Emperor called, they would explain things before him. If there were worthy cases, Emperor would affix his signature. Likewise, many issues used to come before His Majesty. Many people met the Emperor to get things done that would be advantageous to them."

One day, a Metropolitan came and submitted an application to the Emperor. After five minutes, His Majesty called me inside and said, "All the Metropolitans are none other than pigs. They do not have any desire to be at their parishes and do good work there. They all need money, land or car from me. Their only job is to represent before me for these sorts of things. How would this Church grow spiritually?" Thus, he shared his concern for the Church with me.

"He was sharing these with me because he had no one to discuss matters those perturbed his inner faculties. His Majesty regarded Ethiopian Church very high. People might not have valued his feelings towards the Church. Yet, he had done many good things for the benefit of Church. The task of leading the Church the right way was a very tough exercise. During the reign of His Majesty, one Metropolitan from the Coptic Church used to be in Ethiopia who was the Head of

this Church. Though there was a Metropolitan from the Ethiopian Church, he had no authority worth mentioning. The situation prevailed then was like that. Later, there were negotiations with Coptic Church that yielded result by arriving at a compromise."

"Based on a compromise settlement, the Church ordained a Patriarch as the Head and four other Metropolitans. These things happened when I was there. I was the one who was handling official files related to these. Matters pertaining to these issues earlier were under the Prime Minister. His Majesty himself had gone for getting the settlement proposal signed. One of the kings in Egypt chaired a committee for this and thus matters progressed systematically and fast. In 1956, the concerned dignitaries signed this agreement allowing independence to the Ethiopian Church. Consequently, the Ethiopian Church had its own Patriarch in 1957. His Majesty evinced good interest in all these and allied matters of Church. He used to tell me, 'Even if there are many Metropolitans, there are none who do things perceiving things the right way. These Metropolitans do nothing.' I responded, 'Being from the community of Laity, I cannot interfere in such issues. I know all the Metropolitans. We can brief them many things, but they fail to comprehend and initiate actions. I have doubts how much they are capable to manage their affairs.' His Majesty told me, 'Not that they are incapable, but they do not realize their capacity.' Thus that dialogue ended."

"I was a much sought after guest at Embassy cocktail receptions and dinner parties. The foreign diplomats must have thought that they could pump out palace information from me. The Indian Ambassador also frequently entertained me. The Russian Ambassador, Boris Karavaev, was particularly friendly; his main purpose must have been to squeeze out maximum information. There were times when I went to two and three cocktail parties in one evening, though I was careful not to let my evening classes suffer. Very soon I decided to give up whisky and hard liquors altogether, and to stick to wines and fruit juices. Ethiopian Government Ministers also began inviting me home for dinners and parties. There were also the imperial dinners which were particularly sumptuous. I had become very fond of Ethiopian food, especially *injera* and *wat*. *Injera* was a

large flat thin pancake, about two feet in diameter, made of fermented *teff* (a local grain) flour, folded in four or rolled up. *Wat* could be any spicy side dish with sauce, usually chicken (*doro-wat*) or meat (*sega-wat*) or split peas (*qeq-wat*)."

"One of the most touching experiences was when a minister invited me to his house, and while at dinner, made quite a package of injera and choice dishes, kneading them together with his fingers, and then, asking me to open my mouth, put the whole lot in. It was a difficult experience for an Indian, but I had no option except to eat it. I was told later that this was a sign of great affection and warmth, though I found it slightly embarrassing at the time. But it was part of my acculturation process."

Like all Semitic tribes, Ethiopians too do not consume pork; similarly, they do not consume the flesh of flying birds as they consider such birds are travelling in the company of angels. Until Varghese stayed in Ethiopia, he followed a life style almost in line with those of Ethiopians including food habits. However, he could not reconcile with one thing; that was eating raw meat. Nevertheless, this seems to be very tasty for them. In all banquets, after the main dish, this raw meat comes to the table. You will get a leg of cow meat, a sharp knife and some chilly powder. You can cut off a piece of your choice and eat it mixing with the chilly powder. Even at the banquets hosted by the Emperor, as soon as you enter the hall, you can see big beef pieces hanging on the pillars. The bearers cover them with clean clothes to save from flies sticking to them. After the main dish, the bearers take these to the tables with knife and chilly powder. Based on emotional reasons, not on principles, Varghese stayed away from this tasty dish. Consumption of raw meat has caused attack of worms among Ethiopians (Metropolitan had not consumed meat since accepting the order of monkhood in 1975).

Life with the Emperor

Haile Selassie is affectionate in nature. Anyone confronting him would like him. Varghese had very high regards for him. He had great affection and respect for the Emperor. Varghese had understood much earlier that their ideas were not that congruent mutually. As

this would turn into problems, Varghese adjusted himself to deal things differently.

"He was a statesman and a strategist, but also a warm human being. He was quite abstemious, ate very little, and except for the occasional glass of champagne on a ceremonial occasion, did not drink very much alcohol. He was very strict about his fasting and regular prayers and church worship. Especially during the Great Lent before Easter, when the Ethiopians fast for 56 days, he would not eat anything until three o'clock in the afternoon. He would be in his office, working. At three he would go to his private chapel, where there would be a special prayer service which lasted for an hour. Only after that he would break his fast."

"Everyone stood in awe of him, including his own grown up sons and daughters, but not his wife, Empress Menen. She was the only forthright critic he had, so long as she lived. Her death seems to have signaled the beginning of a period of decline in Haile Sellassie's life. I always greeted him in the accepted Ethiopian way, even for his sons - to bow all the way down before him and to touch the ground every first time you greeted him in the day. The protocol for the eldest son, the Crown Prince was a little more strict. We only had to bow, bending double and touching the ground with our fingers. The Crown Prince had to fall down flat on the ground before the Emperor, touching the ground with his forehead, in a gesture of obeisance like the Indian *sashtangapranama*. This he had to do every first time in the day he saw his father. I felt sorry often for the Crown Prince who was several years senior to me. People said all kinds of things by way of explanation. One story was that the loyalty of the son to the father was always in doubt, and therefore that this was a stringent requirement laid down by the father to enforce submission and obedience."

"Three members of his perpetual entourage were accredited to me. I could approach any of them any time with a message or memorandum for the Emperor, and they would immediately transmit it to him, in office or bedroom. They were also the ones whom the Emperor would send to call me into the presence. Of course you

Norvey, 1954

Attend a Feast of Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

could access them only inside the Palace, or sometimes in our "Sunshine Club." This was a stretch of open tarmac between my office (Duke Beith) and the Emperor's Palace. Most of the ministers who came to see the Emperor on business practically every day, spent their time gossiping and waiting in this open court for the Emperor to call them. There was a waiting room inside the Palace. Apart from the Prime Minister, few of the other ministers would go into this room. They preferred to stand in the sunshine and wait. Since only the Emperor could make all the important decisions, most of the ministers wasted whole mornings in the "Sunshine Club." Sometimes the Emperor would not be able to call them at all, though he was quite businesslike and worked for long hours. It was the most inefficient way of running a government, but the Emperor would not readily hand over decision making authority to the ministers."

One weekend, Emperor went to his Debre Zeit palace that was one-hour journey by car from Addis Ababa. He invited Varghese to be with him. While they were at the beautiful lakeside mansion, His Majesty wanted Varghese to take a stroll with him in the palace garden. Varghese had taken up his new assignment in the royal palace just about a few months back. They were walking in the garden up and down; there were no others nearby who could hear what they talked. His Majesty enquired about the well-being of Varghese and said:

"I want your advice. I have a problem with one of my ministers. You know my Defence Minister, Ras Abebe Aregai. He is the richest person in the country. And yet, he is getting a kickback from the daily rations of every single soldier in the army. I have evidence for it now. What should I do?"

His Highness Ras Abebe Aregai was the leader of the Ethiopian Resistance to Mussolini's occupation of Ethiopia, a rough country soldier rose to prominence because of his skill in strategizing and taking risks. When the Emperor was in exile in Europe, Abebe was an outlaw in the jungles of Ethiopia, leader of the guerrilla resistance fighters, sought by the fascist troops of Mussolini, but protected and respected by his people for his courage and skill. When the Emperor

regained his country with the help of his own émigré' troops and the Allied army, he honored Abebe Aregai with all kinds of endowments and titles, until he rose to the highest possible title and rank in the country, Ras, equivalent to the Indian Rajah. He had been serving also as Defense Minister and as the head of one of the largest armies in Africa.

"I knew him, but did not think very highly of him, not because he was not very cultured, but since I knew from the comments of everyone that he was dishonest and corrupt. He was fabulously rich, living in a palace of his own."

Without much hesitation, Varghese shared his frank opinion with His Majesty: "Your Majesty, Ras Abebe is known to the people as a very corrupt man. He is not very popular among them today, though he was the people's hero during the Resistance. On the other hand, Your Majesty's prestige among the people is very high, and they would admire you all the more if you punish a corrupt man for his misdeeds. Such exemplary punishment would be very good for the country, where there is so much corruption and it is growing day by day, as I understand. Of course there should be an open trial, during which his crime and the evidence for it should be exposed."

Haile Sellassie was silent for a few seconds, and then smiled at Varghese, with a sad look in his eyes. "I was testing you. You are rather naive and politically inexperienced, as I expected. You know nothing about how a country is to be run. What would happen if I throw him down from his pinnacle? What I told you about him is true, and I have the evidence. But if I fire him, first, I would have a rich, cunning and very powerful enemy. Second, I will have to create another lord like him, for an Emperor needs these 'buffers' between him and the people. I would have to endow such a lord with the wealth of the people. And when he gets sufficiently powerful, he will also become corrupt, like his predecessor. These things have to be handled differently, with skill and care. Statecraft is neither easy nor straightforward."

Varghese could not guess what His majesty had in mind and could not comprehend his logic. In his test on statecraft, Varghese ended

on the losing side. That was it.

"I knew I was too naive and not wily enough for politics. Only much later I understood how much damage could be done by people regarding themselves as honest at the head of public affairs. I readily think of the experience of Jimmy Carter and Rajiv Gandhi who set out to do honest politics. I had failed the test, but I did not feel sorry. I did not want to pass such tests."

The Emperor went on to talk about other things. They talked about religion and international affairs and many other subjects. Varghese kept the discussion about the Defense Minister in his heart and brooded over it. These were state secrets and one could not discuss with anyone.

A few days later, the personal phone at the office of Varghese rang. He took the receiver and heard a rough voice from the other end. "Good morning Lord, the Defense Minister would like to talk to you."

Varghese replied, "I am ready." Immediately, the voice of Ras Abebe Aregai was there in the receiver. It was a voice very soft, very polite and very courteous. "I have a petition to present to my lord. I want to come and see my lord. Kindly give me an appointment at a time convenient to my lord."

Addressing a person, "my Lord" is common in Amharic language. It is equivalent to addressing "sir", but may be little more formal. "I have a representation for my Lord," means this much, 'I want a thing to be done.' Whatever be that, it is over courteous that a senior minister spoke so politely to a junior staff of the Emperor's office. If the Defense Minister has something, the protocol is that he can go direct to His Majesty and sort it out.

Under such a background, Varghese had no clue as why was there a phone call for him. He had some doubts in mind particularly because it was only a few days since the discussions took place with His Majesty at Debre Zeit. If the Defense Minister came to know about that, the only way is the Emperor himself had disclosed to the minister. There were secret machineries planted by the mafia

everywhere to capture sensitive information from the palace. Even there were mechanizations to tap telephone talks. Emperor had his doubts on such attempts. That was the reason why the Emperor discussed the above issue walking up and down the flower garden at Debre Zeit.

"Your Highness, I should come to you. You do not need to come to me. I will come to your office or home. Just tell me when." Varghese responded in a language rich in respect and honor.

"No, no, I will come to your office at your convenience. Please tell me when I should come." Ras Abebe insisted. Varghese suggested that the minister may come immediately and that he was waiting. "That is most kind of you. Thank you. I will be there in a few minutes."

Varghese expected the minister to come in about half an hour. He decided to reach the entry door of his office by then. However, the minister gave a surprise to Varghese. Probably, he would have called Varghese from somewhere in the palace. He reached immediately. There was a gang of armed army personnel and bodyguards. The gang was waiting outside and the minister alone entered the office of Varghese. Varghese moved to the entry door to receive him. As per custom, Varghese expressed his respect by bowing before the minister and led him to his office chair requesting the minister to occupy that chair for that was the best one available there.

Minister said, "By no means! That is my lord's chair, and I cannot sit on it. I will sit on one of these." He moved towards one of the other chairs, but Varghese invited him again to sit on the seat he had chosen. Varghese was standing in between his chair and the table.

"My Lord has to sit down first", minister insisted. Varghese replied, "No, Your Highness is far senior to me, and must sit first before I can sit." Varghese was enjoying in his heart of hearts these fights of artificial courtesies. He also decided that he would not surrender easily to the verbal exercises of the Defense Minister.

"My lord is more honorable. You must sit first. How can I sit, without your sitting?" Varghese was determined not to surrender even for the sake of courtesy. They spent some of their time in these

wordy tussles. At the end, Varghese said, "Your Highness, if you will not honor me by sitting down, then we have no option except to stand and talk."

Varghese was under the impression that with this, he would agree to sit, but Ras Abebe Aregai did not. His strategy was to impose his will power over Varghese, but Varghese was not ready to succumb to him so easily.

Minister ultimately said, "If that is the will of my lord, then we will stand and talk." Thus, they entered the subject, both standing. Varghese was standing between his chair and his office table; the minister stood on the other side of the table.

"I came to see my Lord, because I need a little help." He began quite cautiously: "It is a little personal help I need, nothing official."

"But how can I, a poor newcomer, help someone like you, Your Highness?"

"My lord can help me. In fact you alone can help me."

"Please tell me how I can help Your Highness."

"You know how difficult it is for a minister to balance his domestic budget and make both ends meet. He has to give endless dinner parties and entertain lavishly. He has to live in grand style and maintain a large domestic staff, several cars, special clothes and so on. You know how meager a minister's salary is. He gets only a little more than what you, my lord, gets."

Varghese could not even have a wide guess as to which direction the conversation was heading. He could not foresee anything. Those were days when Varghese was too straightforward in matters of these sorts. Under such circumstances, the only way was patiently listening to his monologues. The person considered the richest as estimated by the emperor, the Defense Minister Ras Abebe Aregai continued.

"So I have been trying to supplement my income by trying to build a couple of houses which I could give out on rent."

Now Varghese caught hold of the line of his tactful planning. Ras Abebe has 500 odd houses within limits of the city itself; he was getting more than a million dollars in rent. He was one of the biggest landholders of the country as known to everybody. For this reason, people were maintaining hatred towards him. Such a multi millionaire was standing before Varghese and begging shamelessly that he was trying to build two houses for renting out and working hard to balance his domestic budget. However, Varghese had to hide is ethical emotions here. He cannot simply dish out falsities as the minister was doing. Varghese waited patiently to see how far this monologue proceeds. He did not show any feelings or emotions on his face, though it was difficult. Minister continued his talk.

"You know how expensive housing construction has become these days. I am running out of money and cannot finish these houses. I need a loan, desperately." He paused.

The richest man in Ethiopia is talking about a loan with a man who does not even have a bank balance of 1000 dollars! Varghese did not understand anything. He wanted to ask the minister to open out, but controlled himself and with all courtesy, asked him, "But what can I do about that, Your Highness?"

"Oh, you can indeed help me. In fact, you are the only one who can help me. That is why I came to you."

The logical thoughts, comprehensive intellect, legitimacy of perception and semantic ideology of Varghese are under test. He could perceive that the idea would not be to recommend for a loan before His Majesty. Ras Abebe is too sharp a person that he could easily comprehend what the Emperor thinks about him.

Without expressing any ill feeling, Varghese asked him frankly, "But how can I help, Your Highness?"

"Let me tell you. The only source from which I can get a loan is the bank, the State Bank of Ethiopia. You know the manager of the Bank. He is your friend and fellow countryman, Mr. Menezes. If you put in a word for me, he will grant me a loan."

There was only one bank Ethiopia then. That was a Government owned one. Menezes was from Goa. Varghese knew that he was in the midst of all corruption in Ethiopia. Varghese had acquainted with him. Nevertheless, he cannot be a friend; Varghese knew him and that is all. Menezes had sanctioned loans to all corrupt landowners and greedy businesspersons. He used to grab his commission in each sanction of loan. Menezes was a close associate in the house construction project and other ventures of the Defense Minister.

Varghese replied to the minister, "Oh, Mr. Menezes. He will do anything Your Highness asks him to do. It is better that Your Highness speaks to him directly, now. Shall I call him?" Varghese attempted to dial the phone but Ras Abebe said, "No, don't. Don't call him now. He has given me loans in the past, but don't call him now. After I am gone, you can call him, and recommend a loan for me."

Even now, Varghese could not get where the trap was. Nevertheless, he understood that there was a trap somewhere. He was not prepared to fall into it. So he spoke to Ras Abebe calm and quiet, but in firm words, "No, Your Highness, I will not be able to help you. I will not ask Mr. Menezes to give you a loan. You can ask him directly and he will give you what you ask. I have no doubt about that. But I do not want to be involved." The words from Varghese

were strong and final. Minister comprehended what Varghese meant. In a very cool and low voice, the minister replied, "If you will not help me, I will have to go somewhere else for help. Thank you for your time. Pardon me for having bothered you." He bent his head and took leave after shaking hands with Varghese. Varghese accompanied him up to the door and attempted to move with him until the main entrance, which the minister objected. His security staffs were waiting outside.

"I came back to my desk, sat down and prayed. I thanked God for not letting me fall into whatever trap there was. I did not know whether the Defense Minister was going to be my enemy from this time forth. I did not worry too much about that. I reflected, seeking to make sense of this call. I could not see the point. I decided to seek some advice, very discreetly. There was only one man among the senior ministers whom I fully trusted. He was a Tigre from the North, Ato Abebe Retta, Minister of Health. He was known not to be corrupt. So I phoned him and said I wanted to see him. He asked me to come right away. He was several years my senior in age, very honest and forthright, and rather fond of me. I could not share with him my conversation with the Emperor about the Defense Minister, because that was a state secret. But I narrated to him in detail the visit of the Defense Minister to my office."

"He listened very carefully, reflected for a minute and then said to me: 'What you did was absolutely right. I have no way of knowing what the Defense Minister's real intention was. I can only make a guess. You probably know that there is a group of nine or so top people who have woven a closed circle around the Emperor. No information gets to the Emperor without their knowledge, and what they do not want the Emperor to know, does not get through. Now the Emperor has foxed them by bringing you. You have broken through their circle. They would like to co-opt you into their circle. You have the unusual freedom of bringing anything to the notice of the Emperor, a freedom which I do not have as a senior Minister. They resent that.' 'But how do they co-opt me, by making me ask Menezes for a loan for Ras Abebe?' I asked."

"Again, I can only guess", said the Health Minister. "Suppose for a moment that you fell into the trap and asked Menezes to help Ras Abebe with a loan. Menezes has been giving loans to Ras Abebe ever since the bank started, and you will never know what transpires between them. But I can guess what Menezes will say to you, something like: "Oh, Ras Abebe! I won't give him a loan. I have given him many loans in the past and he is very remiss about timely repayment. But since this is the first time that you ask me for a favor, let me see what I can do," That is all he will say. You will never even know whether Ras Abebe got a fresh loan or whether he needed such a loan. But one day when Ras Abebe sees you in the Sunshine Club or somewhere else, he will invite you to lunch or dinner in his house. You will have a sumptuous dinner. The guests will be carefully chosen that they can be future witnesses to what goes on at the dinner. Probably there will be a secret movie camera (video cameras did not exist in those days) and a secret tape recorder operating all the time. Towards the end of the dinner, the Defense Minister will say to you something like: 'Oh, I cannot thank you enough for coming to my rescue in what was a difficult financial situation for me. If you had not helped me, I would not have known where to turn. I would like to express my gratitude by this little token.' He would hand you a little envelope with some money in it, and it will all be recorded, with eye-witnessess. You would then have received your own kick-back, and then you are part of their circle, because they can use the evidence against you any time."

Everywhere including India, these types of strategies were common with political activists as Varghese understood gradually. During that time, Varghese did not have any awareness or experience in such matters.

"I understood that the advice of my friend was more or less true. I was not getting proper sleep at home. I was a bachelor with not many liabilities. Yet, I had tests or temptations on money matters. Though I got a salary of 4000 Rupees, I was tight because after paying wages to my driver, domestic servants and gardener, and hosting parties to Ambassadors and Royal Family members occasionally, I used to find things a bit difficult. Under such

STILLWATER

circumstances, I doubted, I might fall prey to temptations of accepting some money out of the way as my conscience would not be very strong to resist that. If my conscience could not overcome temptations sitting at the centre of the source of power, it would be better to come down, as the ethical coward in me decided. Very shortly, I submitted my letter of resignation to the Emperor forgoing my assignment at the Royal Palace. During my service at the palace for three years, I submitted resignation five times, and the emperor declined on all the five occasions."

"When I retrospect the incidents of those days, I have a serious doubt in me as to whether the Emperor too was party to the corruption net around him. I was very confident about the truthfulness of His Majesty. However, in the backdrop of incidents of later years, I did have doubts about his sincerity. The discussion at the flower garden itself was proof enough that he was well aware of the corruption ring around him. I used to feel those days about his stand on that issue, particularly, why he did not object to it strongly. Now I doubt that he did not initiate any actions against the corrupt because they would have evidences with them that he himself was corrupt."

"Gold mining was one the major sources of revenue for Ethiopia. The gold mined from these was the personal asset of the Emperor. He was keeping the entire earnings through this in foreign banks. During the period I was working in his personal staff (1956 - 59), I was not much aware of this. However, I had opened accounts in the names His Majesty and his grandson Prince Paul in one or two foreign banks. He had strongly warned me from sharing matters of these accounts with even his family members. Had I known that these were all issues of high level corruption, I would have escaped from there much earlier."

"The explanation of Ato Abebe Retta completely convinced me about the power group around the Emperor, most of whom I could identify. For example, the Prime Minister (son-in-law of the Emperor), the Defense Minister, the Interior Minister, the Finance Minister, the Minister of the Pen, and the Holder of the Imperial Purse, who happened to be a priest were at the top of the ring of corruption. I

became aware that I was unsuited to power jobs in any government. I knew that I would not always succeed in resisting the blandishments of money and power. One thing the Defense Minister said was true. It was becoming difficult for me to balance my own budget, because of the frequent demands on outlays for clothing, cars, salaries of domestic servants, entertainment of guests, parties, donations and so on. It was easy to accept a little gift voluntarily offered by people who had benefited from one's services. That is the way it all begins. From then on it is all a downhill spiral."

"I could probably learn the tricks of the power game fairly quickly. But in that process I would have lost something I regarded as very valuable in myself. Not that I am scrupulously honest or anything like that. Yet one has no desire to be like many government officials in India, both high and low, who seem today to have no compunction about accepting bribes large and small from all and sundry. I went home, prayed reflected. I decided that this way of life was not for me. I carefully prepared a resignation letter and submitted it to the Emperor. I did not mention all my reasons. I simply stated that I would like to go back to India and start serving my people, ordinary people."

"A few days later the Emperor called me to his office. He talked to me with great affection. He said he needed me and that it was difficult to find honest people to work for him. He talked to me about several new responsibilities he wanted me to take up. One was the Charitable Foundation (*Baggo Adragot*) which he had set up with his own personal money to serve the deserving poor people. The other was to advise the Ministry of Education. A third was to be Executive Secretary to the Ethiopian Government Committee for Relief Aid given by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Aid for victims of the last war. Honestly I did not have the heart to refuse. I expected there would be some opportunity for real service to people in these new assignments. A few days later I got the orders appointing me as Advisor to the Ministry of Education, Advisor to the Haile Sellassie I Charitable Foundation, and Executive Secretary of the UNRRA Committee."

"As time went on, I discovered that these jobs were largely decorative. I went to many committee meetings, studied many projects and proposals and gave advice on them. But very little of my advice was actually put into practice. I had no executive power in either the Ministry of Education or the Charitable Foundation. The Ethiopians in charge, Ato Kebbede Michael and Ato Tafari Sharo, resented my meddling, and while being polite to me, held me at bay from any real authority. The UNRRA job was routine, and was slowly winding up as UN Funds gradually dried up. Vested interests were regnant everywhere, and I am not the kind that would fight for my own power, or try to overthrow other people from power in order to establish my own. I could have fought with some hope of success, since the Emperor was on my side. But I avoided any major power struggle, since my mind was set on getting out of the power game."

Varghese was popular in Ethiopia, knew all the important people and had genuine affection and respect for the Emperor. Still he was terribly lonely, unhappy and spiritually restless. There was no friend with whom he could share his feelings and who would understand. As a laity, he got to know the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abuna Baselios, a pious monk of the old school and was very fond of Varghese. With Abuna Theophilose, the powerful prelate who had scolded him and admonished him against leaving Ethiopia the first time was on very close and friendly terms. Though he spoke no English, he was knowledgeable in the traditional lore of Ethiopia, and Varghese learned much from him.

"Among the Indians, I had few friends. I went to the home of Mr. John Barnabas for an occasional game of bridge. I visited Mr. Balachandran Nair, the Community Development Advisor, who was in Ethiopia on a short one-year assignment. There was Mr. Varghese, the Legal Advisor in the Ministry of Law, whose wife was a distant cousin of mine. I visited the homes of the Indian teachers, but only rarely. The important thing in all these families was that they all had young children, and I was always immensely fond of children. Children were a green spot in my life. Their company made me forget my woes, at least for the time being."

The Emperor with students of Haile Selassie University, Addis Abeba.

"But I was unhappy, and did not share my unhappiness with anyone. I prayed about it. One particular occasion, I remember the dialogue with God was particularly meaningful. I kept saying to God, in my usual petulant manner: "What have you done to me, my God? I was so spiritually aglow, happy and useful, in India. You have to admit that several people came to know you better because of my work. I did not want to go away from India. Why did you drag me away from such a useful ministry, to this drab spiritual desert, where I am wasting my time?" Quite often, God engages me in a long silence, when I ask a stupid question like that. He usually wants me to answer my own question. He wants me to struggle with myself in silent meditation and come out with an answer. If the answer is not good, He draws me into another silence, till I come out with a better answer. This time the right answer came the very first time, and it came from Him this time, in a very gentle, slightly mocking, but friendly word: "Well, my son, do you think I could have been trying to make you see that I could perhaps not be totally helpless without your help there in India?"

"That hit me. I understood. In India I was in danger of thinking too highly of myself and my spiritual achievements and of my indispensibility to God, that it could have led me into disastrous spiritual pride. Pride of every kind comes rather naturally to me, but spiritual pride is the worst, and most spiritually destructive. I have seen many of our Hindu and Christian holy men fall prey to spiritual pride, primarily because their spiritual attainments did not render them immune to addiction to praise and admiration for themselves. I thanked God for having rescued me from a great spiritual danger in India, and agreed not to question His judgment about what was good for me. Ethiopia was where He had brought me, and in Ethiopia I must stay until I get my next marching orders."

Varghese found it suitable for him to engage himself more in religious activities considering his lack of aptitude for government vocation and the fact that it was not possible to leave Ethiopia so soon. He was teaching in various colleges of Addis Ababa.

An Orthodox Student Movement was just beginning in Ethiopia more or less when the Orthodox Student Movement in Malankara

was to celebrate its Golden Jubilee. There is no surprise in it because colleges had started in Ethiopia just six years early. There were only three colleges then. Of these, the University College had 300 students and two Engineering Colleges together had some 100 students. Here, the issue that one must address is the eroding influence of the Church on the young generation with the development of modern education systems. Young students did not appreciate even discussions of religious matters in the college campus.

Western Catholic Jesuits managed one of the Engineering Colleges, though at Government expenses. Though the Emperor had prohibited them from teaching Catholic faith in the college, they were doing it systematically in the campus. The Roman Pope had exempted Catholic priests working at this college from wearing their clergy cassocks. There was a general talk that the college Principle Dr Matt had the authority of Roman Church leadership to catholicize the whole of Ethiopia. His attire also was just ordinary.

Dr Matt and his team maintained a sort of enmity towards Indians. Earlier, he was the Head Master of a High School in Ethiopia. One day, Dn K M Simon belonging to the Malankara Orthodox Church visited this school and delivered a sermon about Orthodox faith. Next day, the 1000 odd students of this school, barring some 20 Catholics, boycotted classes and shouted slogans that they would not enter classrooms until these catholic teachers leave the school. The Emperor had to intervene to ensure that the students entered classrooms.

The cause behind this agitation was not due to the sermon of Dn Simon alone; for quite some time, the students had problems within themselves due to the Catholic faith and they nurtured strong objections in their hearts. With the sermon of Dn Simon, these sparks burst out like anything.

Anyhow, that hatred of Jesuits had not ended. Paul Varghese had heard that Dr Mat openly declared, “we will not allow any Indian to deliver speeches inside this campus.” Therefore, he did not succeed to initiate in his attempts to befriend students there.

Just before the commencement of new academic year, Varghese met His Majesty and sought his permission to take classes related to

Orthodox faith at University College and at the Theological School where Dn Simon was the Principal.

The Emperor said, "This is a time your work burden is on the increase. Along with that, I doubt whether you can take up this task also." Varghese replied, "I will not complain Your Majesty, that work load is more for me; my concern is that I do not have enough work."

"That is good; I will issue the necessary orders immediately."

Varghese received the orders for Engineering College immediately. While discussing this with His Majesty, Varghese told him that an order was not necessary for the Theological School because Dn Simon, the Principal was a good friend and therefore he would directly communicate. Even after six months, Varghese couldn't do anything there. At the Engineering College, Dr Matt had no way out and therefore, he issued a letter addressed to Varghese advising him to join the College immediately to teach Orthodox faith as ordered by the Emperor. Varghese started his classes at the beginning of the academic year itself.

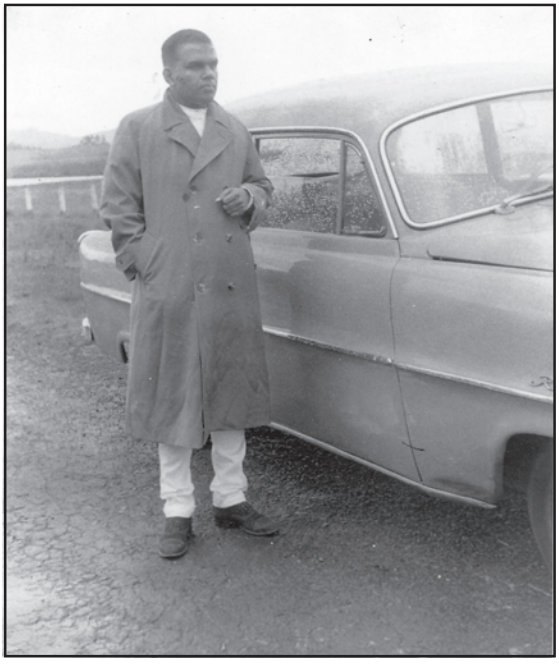
There were 200 Orthodox students at the college. Remaining ones were Muslims, Protestants and Catholics. These 200 students were divided into two batches and he took classes for them one hour each a week.

"Orthodox faith and other Christian beliefs" was the topic for the first term; under this topic, Paul Varghese taught them fundamentals of Orthodox faith in comparison with the faith of Catholics and Protestants. The topic for second term was "Is Orthodox faith in line with Biblical teachings?" With this title, he taught St Paul's Epistle to Ephesians. Varghese wrote an article later where he underlined the earnestness of Ethiopian students in learning Orthodoxy which was not so in our country.

The Orthodox Student Association

In the Orthodox Christian Students Movement Golden Jubilee Souvenir, Varghese wrote an article narrating his current activities in detail and about the plans to start an Orthodox Students Movement in Ethiopia. See the last part of the article: "During the early days of

Haile Sellasie with Tito



my classes, a Jesuit priest used to sit and listen throughout. Occasionally, he used to tell me after the class that I should not have said such things about Catholics. Of late, he has not been coming to the classes; maybe he is now confident in me."

"By the Grace of God, students are increasingly becoming more and more interested in these classes. Occasionally, I share with them about the Orthodox Christian Students Movement in India and the service this movement has been rendering to the Church for the last fifty years. Anyhow, they also decided that they too should have an organization like this. For working out the modalities, they formulated a committee. Thus, somewhat in line with our Students Movement, their Movement also is about to be launched."

"The structure of this Movement here is like this: The Emperor would be the patron and the Head of Ethiopian Orthodox Church Abuno Baselios would be the Honorary President. Former Prime Minister and the present President of the Senate, acceptable uniformly to all the people in this country Ras Bitwoded Makonnen Endalkachew would take over as the President of the Movement. We are yet to get concurrence from these distinguished leaders, but we hope nobody would refuse."

"The name of the Movement (*Haimanote Abew*) is in local Amharic language. Translating, it would mean 'College Students Organization based on the Faith of our Fathers.' General Secretary would be a college student; an advisory council would be there including all the Metropolitans of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church."

"Ethiopian Orthodox Church have recently constructed a hall, which can accommodate 1000 people, for sermons and faith related talks and classes. The authorities have agreed to make this hall available for the students every Saturday afternoon. We are planning to commence our weekly study programs in this hall."

"There is news that the Jesuits in the college have come up with a new technique; since classes related to Orthodox faith are there in college, Muslim students submitted an application to college administration that they too should have opportunities for religious classes in the college. It seems, the College Board has decided not to

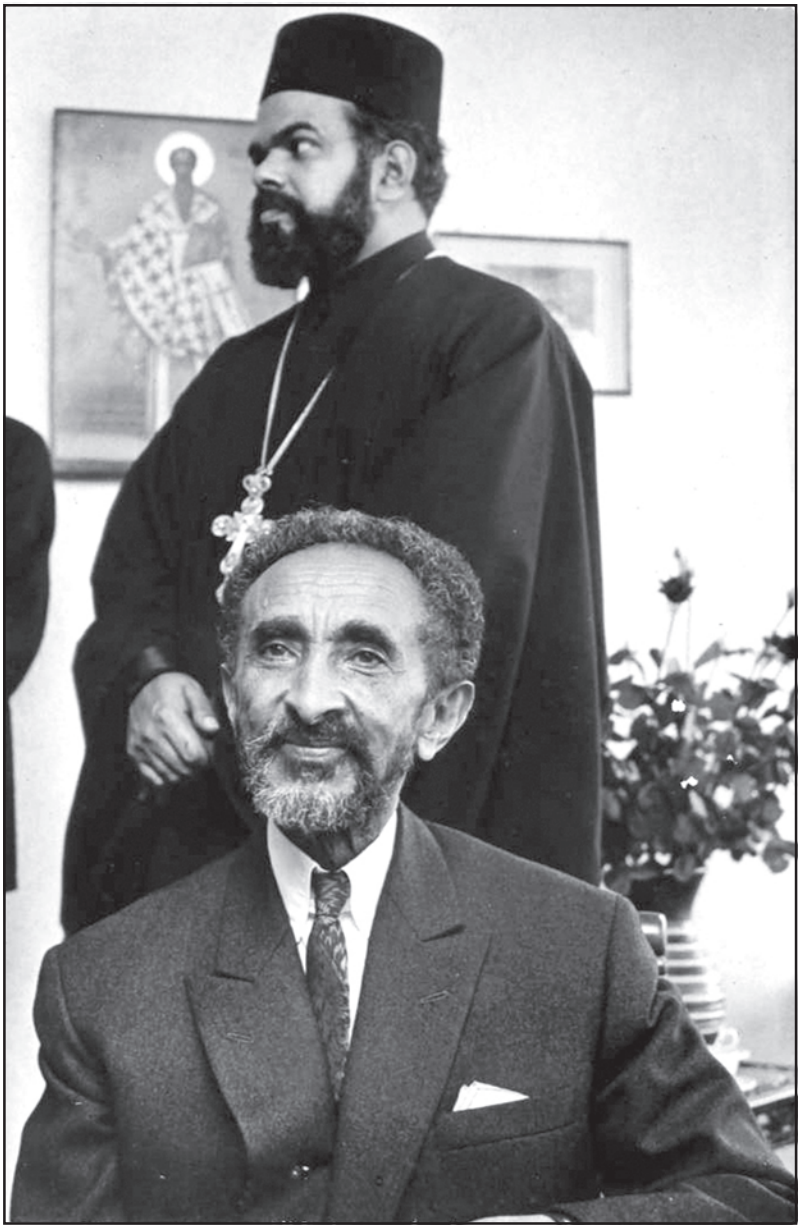
have any sort of religious instructions inside college premises. However, Paul Varghese can continue his classes until the end of the academic year because His Majesty has entrusted him this assignment."

"Whatever be that, these activities are problem filled ones and only the Grace of our Lord can ensure completion of these. I cannot expect any cooperation in these issues other than from the students and His Majesty."

"Almighty God is one who performs miracles in the midst of adversities. Most humbly, I appeal to all believers in our Church in India on the Golden Jubilee celebrations of our Orthodox Christian Students Movement to pray for the upcoming Students Movement in Ethiopia for its growth and its service among students and educated youth in this country that the Church moves forward enlightened in spiritual enthusiasm."

Varghese started forming a Students Movement named *Haimanote Abew* (means The Faith of our Fathers) with the recognition of student community and with permission from the Emperor. There were many people providing a helping hand to Varghese in this attempt. However, the student community was not favoring any close relationship with the official organs of Ethiopian Orthodox Church. One day, Paul Varghese took about 100 students for a retreat. They assembled at the personal chapel of former Prime Minister Ras Bitwoded Makonan Endalkachew. Varghese had very high regard for this senior official who hailed from a very noble family. Rev. Abba Habtemariam who had helped Varghese at the Kattabe Secondary school was helpful here also.

"In those days, Ethiopians took communion only when they were small children or after they became very old. The idea was that so long as one's sexual powers were operative, one was a sinner and should not take communion. It took me a great deal of persuasion and effort to make my students see that this was not a Christian assumption, that there was forgiveness available for every human being in Christ, and that frequent communion was the norm for a true practising Christian. Several students partook of Communion during



that one day retreat at the palace of the former Prime Minister, beautifully situated on a wooded hill. A deep bond was formed among all of us, and that was the beginning of the *Haimanote Abew* (means The Faith of our Fathers). We then organized several study classes and conferences, and this work gave me a lot of satisfaction and occasion for praising God."

"My weekly classes at the University College of Addis Ababa two evenings a week and at the Mahandis Engineering College once a week gave me a great deal of spiritual satisfaction, and seemed to be useful to the young university students. There was no obligation to attend, but 50 to 100 students came regularly. We had also occasional retreats and conferences, which often meant much to the young people. But it was rather difficult for them to relate to the regular Ethiopian Orthodox clergy and worship, both of which belonged to an antiquated, uncritical, feudal framework from which the young university student had been significantly alienated."

While Varghese was leaving Ethiopia in 1959, what pained him most was saying goodbye to these activities among university students. This was not part of his official assignments. He volunteered this. After Varghese left Ethiopia, *Haimanote Abew* grew up with great enthusiasm. This movement did not lose its religious foundation; additionally, it succeeded to enlighten its members politically. Along with this, it saw the policies and governance of Haile Selassie through a critical angle.

* * * * * * *

How was your relation with the leadership of Ethiopian Church?

"I had a good relation with Church leadership in Ethiopia. Not only with the Patriarch, but with his successor Theophilose also I was close. He was a bishop then. I used to visit him frequently and discuss many things. He had a liking for me. Thus, I was maintaining good relations with Ethiopian Church. There were many people from Kerala there including priests. We had permission to celebrate Holy Qurbana at the Emperor's Cathedral. Along the community of teachers, there were two priests namely Fr Koshy and Fr N M

Thomas. These two fathers were celebrating Holy Qurbana at the Cathedral. This indeed was great success. Later, His Majesty handed over us a chapel at another palace he had. We formed a parish there. We used to celebrate Holy Qurbana there every Sunday. Occasionally, I used to attend the Holy Qurbana of Ethiopian Church after which I would move to our chapel to take part in ours."

Did you have any opportunities to do philanthropic works there?

"There was one organization named Haile Selassie Foundation and His Majesty had special interest in that. He made me an advisor of this foundation. I used to go there and organize certain activities. His Majesty had earmarked two million Dollars and using its interest, activities like construction of houses and hospitals for the poor were there. However, bureaucratic style of functioning ruled the procedures. Yet I could do something positively through this foundation. Such activities had a soothing effect on me and I had a sense of satisfaction. His Majesty appointed me as an advisor to Ministry of Education and Social Welfare."

Could you meet the Education Minister and officials who were in charge while you were teaching in school during your earlier vocation?

The then Education Minister had become an important Minister of the Cabinet; his brother was the Prime Minister. They all liked me sincerely and were not against me. What Kirubel did was prompted by his jealousy towards me was clear to all of them. As far as the incident was concerned, they had a good regard about me. Nobody had any ill feeling on me in such an episode."

The second son of the Emperor was very smart. Even he used to seek assistance of Paul Varghese to get some matters agreed by the Emperor. So much was the influence Varghese had on the Emperor. Even members of the royal family believed that if Paul Varghese presented issues before His Majesty, it would get approval immediately.

"Once in a while, family members of His Majesty would come

and request me to advise the Emperor to eat more food and take more rest. However, I cannot tell such things always. Certain things I would tell, that is all. We were having a good and friendly relation."

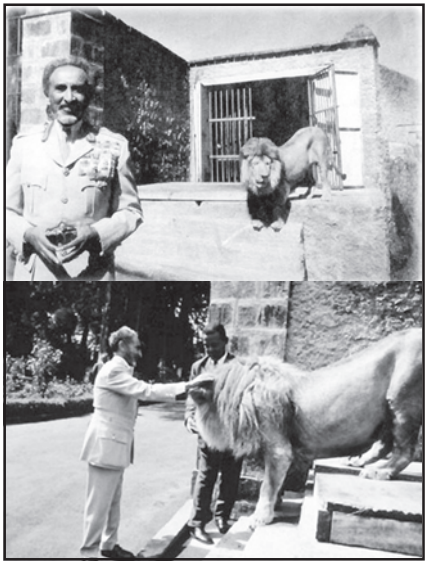
Were there any differences of opinion with ministers?

"Occasionally, there may be objections from ministers. If I take a stand against the suggestions of ministers, they would try to harass me. There were such instances."

After a year Paul Varghese was in Ethiopia in the personal staff of the Emperor, His Majesty summoned Varghese and told him to be present at his office the next day. Emperor said, "There are some allocations of positions. To know your assignments, be present there." His Majesty was planning a re allocation of portfolios of Ministers as well as to appoint a few Deputy Ministers. Next day, about twenty ministers were standing in line waiting their turn; Paul Varghese was also with them. Then Prime Minister Kaimdo called Varghese and told him, "I think, there is no need for you to wait here; I have informed this to His Majesty." Varghese turned back from there telling the Prime minister that he was not waiting. Later, he came to know that the Emperor was planning to induct Varghese into his cabinet of Ministers, but the Prime Minister advised against this move.

"I do not know why the Prime Minister advised His Majesty like that. Anyhow, that made me happy. I was not inclined to take up a position like that. I do not think this was due to any personal enmity the Prime Minister had on me. May be, some other ministers who were not friendly with me would have made the Prime Minister take such a stand. I have never asked His Majesty about these later. I did not ask him why the Prime Minister sent me back while the Emperor asked me to be present there. There was no need for me to check such things. I never cherished any such wishes in me."

In 1958 December, Paul Varghese came to India on an official visit. A gathering of Malayalees was there to receive him at the Airport. Fr K C Thomas, Vicar of New Delhi parish led the group. They were covering their faces with the Malayala Manorama daily, which enabled Paul Varghese to read the headlines, 'Peace in Malankara Church.' Paul Varghese went straight to Hotel Clarijius. Inside his



Selassie Menelik maintained his uncle Menelik II's lion garden and is here seen with a couple of cubs.

room, he praised the Lord. For long, Paul Varghese was praying for this and God answered it now in a way that was unexpected. He thanked God. Paul Varghese was having a desire since long to work for God, but priesthood was not in his scheme of things. However, on this blessed occasion, he committed himself to the Almighty. Sitting in that hotel room, he took a decision, 'I will serve this Church as a priest.'

"This was an expression of thanks that God accepted what we were praying for since 1956. Sitting in the hotel room, I dispatched a letter to HH The Catholicos revealing my thoughts, 'I submit myself wholly for God and our Church.' I also told HH that I was prepared to resign my job at Ethiopia. Later, I went and met HH. He was very happy. He ordained me a Deacon at Kuruppumpady church. He told me the previous night of my ordination, 'I am aged. I am not concerned about dying as the Head of this Church; but my concern is which way the Church would go. I have concern as to which way the faith would go. Now we have many in our Church who have gone abroad and studied. But I am relieved as you are one who has learnt true faith of our Church the right way, which makes me confident to die in peace.' These words touched me deep in my heart. These words encouraged me when HH Augen Baselius appointed me as Principal of our Seminary."

The inspiration for Paul Varghese to choose priesthood was from HH Baselius Geevarghese Catholicos. Metropolitan recalls, "It used to be moments of inspiration whenever I was talking with HH; my commitment and urge to become a priest in our Church has come from His Holiness in its wholeness. The two Metropolitans whom I respected and loved most in our Church were HH Baselius Geevarghese II Catholicos and Pampady Thirumeni."

A M Thomas, Deputy Minister of Food in the Central Cabinet of India wrote a letter to Paul Varghese on 1959 January 22, "This is only to convey my respectful congratulations on the ordination and I believe that we are all fortunate in having a promising young man like you in the priestly order."

May 19 was the observance of National Day in Ethiopia. There

were parade and celebrations. The Emperor would accept Guard of Honor. Usually, Varghese was attending these parades with His Majesty. As per protocol, the position for Varghese was after those of the Ministers. During the parade, Varghese had no specific responsibilities. This year, on the previous day itself, Varghese decided that he was not going to attend the parade; he was working with no rest on all days including Saturday and Sunday. There were classes for about eight study groups. He was too tired and thought to take rest and slept until nine in the morning. At 9'O clock, three officers came to his house and conveyed a message that he should report to His Majesty immediately. Varghese got up, hurried through his morning chores and rushed to the palace. His Majesty was strolling in his room wearing his attire for the parade. As usual, Varghese bowed before him. Emperor started talking seated on his throne. Usually, he did not sit on his throne while talking to Varghese.

The Emperor asked, "Do you know who I am? Do you know who you are?" Varghese did not understand the question. 'There is something wrong. He has called me now for something new. The question is to mock at me. His questioning me sitting on the throne and in a serious tone carries some specific purpose.' This was what Varghese thought.

Varghese bowed once again with all humility, said, 'Emperor of Ethiopia, Lion of Yehuda', and used all sorts of qualifications attributed. His Majesty was in a serious mood. He understood that Varghese was talking in a lighter tone. Varghese said about himself, "As far as I am concerned, I am just an ordinary Indian."

"Whatever you said about me is all true. However, what you said about you is wrong. You are neither an ordinary man nor an Indian."

After saying these, His Majesty made a sort of proclamation. "From today, you are a citizen of my country. You are not an Indian. You are an Ethiopian. You are not an ordinary man. You are now a member of the Board of Directors of three hotels in Addis Ababa and of the City Transports. The earnings from these make your life comfortable. Trust, you understand me. I am the Emperor of Ethiopia and you must do whatever I command you."

"This was an occasion I could not say anything opening my mouth. I bowed before him once again and submitted, 'Whatever Your Majesty said is true. I am not an Indian. I am not an ordinary being. I agree all these. At the same time, I am too young. I am not very knowledgeable. I lack in maturity. Whenever Your Majesty commands me something, in case I do not fall in line out of my immaturity or youth, please pardon me.' I did not say that I would not obey the command of the Emperor. I only sought pardon from His Majesty in case I did not obey him on occasions out of my ignorance. I did not tell His Majesty that I would not accept Ethiopian citizenship. My talk would have indicated a forerunner to my non-acceptance of the offer. Nevertheless, His Majesty understood clearly, what I had in my mind. He commanded angrily, 'I do not want to see your face; you can go.' What he attempted here was an effort to bring me under his exclusive submission and make me do whatever he pleased."

"His Majesty wanted to make me a citizen of Ethiopia. The argument of his Prime Minister was that offering the position of a Minister to one who was not a citizen of Ethiopia was wrong. Therefore, the Emperor tried to make me an Ethiopian citizen. Once I take over the administration of those establishments, I would have enough money to lead a very comfortable life. I would be receiving ten times of my present salary. His Majesty was prepared to issue his order placing me as Minister of some portfolio had I accepted his command of accepting the citizenship. My refusal to accept his command to be an Ethiopian citizen helped me overcome the present situation."

By this time, Paul Varghese had taken his decision to leave Ethiopia. He had submitted applications to various universities for higher studies and secured admission at Yale University for PhD. Scholarship was available. The savings earned during his service so far at Ethiopia would have been sufficient to meet travel expenses. It was under such circumstances, Paul Varghese and His Majesty had the above conversation. For a few days, the Emperor had some sort of ill feeling towards Paul Varghese. Nevertheless, work allocations for him continued as usual.

"One day, Emperor summoned me and asked, 'What is your aim in life?' I said, 'I want to serve God; I want to serve the poor.' 'To serve God, there is no need for you to leave Ethiopia. To serve the poor also, you do not have to leave Ethiopia. I have sons and daughters. Nevertheless, sustenance of my name is not through them. What I have is Haile Selassie Foundation. I have provided 70 million dollars as its capital; I wish providing another 250 million dollars. I want you to take up its exclusive responsibility. Even after my lifetime, you have to go on with it. You will get lots of opportunities to help poor through its activities.' His talk was heart touching. He would have realized that nothing was possible by ordering. He did not have too much affinity towards his sons and daughters. Only one daughter was in line with him. This was the reason why he told me that sustaining his name would not be through his sons and daughters."

"I replied very politely, 'This is something about which I am very sorry, Your Majesty. My wish is to obey whatever Your Majesty commands. However, this issue is something that affects my entire life. If I enter this, I would end up my life as an administrator. I would not have any direct link with the poor. I may be able to formulate many projects. My aim is not like that. What I look forward is to work within a Church related scenario.' The Emperor said that Church like relationship can be set up with this also. I replied to him that my talents were not that way. 'You do not have to tell me about your talents. I know that.' Ultimately, I refused to take up that responsibility too."

Paul Varghese submitted a letter of resignation expressing his desire to go for further studies. Reading this, the Emperor summoned Varghese and told him, 'You cannot go away from here. I will not allow that.'

In 1959 May, the Emperor made a trip to Yugoslavia. He was a good friend of Communist leader Tito. Tito used to pay visits to Ethiopia and the Emperor used to visit Yugoslavia often. His present plan was to spend a month with Tito. Varghese saw this as his best opportunity to come out of Ethiopia. He decided to act swiftly. He met the Personal Secretary of the Emperor and discussed the matter.

Varghese was working with him very often. They were preparing the speeches for His Majesty after mutual discussions. Listening to Varghese, he said, "How can you go? Orders of the Emperor are to the contrary."

"That will not suit my plans; I must leave now. Without giving rise to another occasion, I will quietly leave the country and send him a telegram that I have left Ethiopia. That is the only way out. I need your permission for that."

"I have no authority to give you permission. At the same time, I cannot say that you cannot leave Ethiopia because you are an Indian citizen. By law, you can go wherever you desire to go."

Varghese explained things to the Ministers and the Indian Ambassador. He left Ethiopia in May itself. He went straight to Geneva. He had written a letter to the officials of Bossey Ecumenical Institute and they had arranged for his stay there. This institute was working under the World Council of Churches. Varghese had been there once or twice earlier and such acquaintance made them to accommodate him. People there knew him as an active worker of Student Movement. Moreover, they knew Varghese as one who delivered talks at the All Student Movement Assembly.

"As soon as I landed at Geneva, I sent a telegram to His Majesty 'care of' Tito. 'I have left Ethiopia and am joining Yale University for higher studies in a month or two.' I prayed for his blessings. I received a reply wire asking me to meet him at Yugoslavia. I proceeded immediately. His Majesty was staying at Bryan, a personal island of Tito located on the Northern part of Yugoslavia. There was prohibition of entry to this island for citizens of Yugoslavia as also for foreigners. Therefore, His Majesty had briefed me all instructions in detail. Accordingly, I reached Yugoslavia. Arrangements were there to receive me and take to the island in boat. Seeing me, the Emperor did not talk much. Neither was he angry. I stayed with him there for two days."

"The day after I reached there, Tito and His Majesty were going for a pleasure trip in boat. He invited me to join. There were many

small islands on the Northern part of Yugoslavia. Tito showed them all one by one to His Majesty. After a while, he left Tito and came to where I was in the boat. He started conversing in Amharic, 'See I am an Emperor, King of Kings. You know the way I am living. Even my palace is too simple. Look at this man. He is a communist. He is a leader of laborers. Yet, he has seven palaces in these islands. He says I can have one of them.' Emperor would not speak so openly to Ethiopians. He used his freedom to talk to me so frankly. What he said was Tito, though a Communist was living more luxuriously than he was. There was not much of a discussion on personal matters. He asked me where I was going. I told him, I would be staying at Geneva for a few weeks and then proceed to Yale University in America for higher studies. He did not say anything on that further. He would have thought that any further talk on that would not yield any worthwhile results. He asked me to continue my warm and loving relationship with him. I said, 'Surely, I will do so.' Thus, I stayed there for two days and then bid farewell to His Majesty. With this visit, he accepted my leaving Ethiopia and openly published it."

After a few weeks at Bossey Ecumenical Institute, Dn Paul Varghese moved on to Yale University. Yale, one of the two most ancient universities in America is in a small township New Haven, six miles north of New York and close to seacoast. Yale Divinity School is on a small hilltop two to three miles away from the township. Divinity School is part of the Yale University. Graduating from this Divinity School is graduating from Yale University.

'Yale is an education centre for the rich. There are no scholarships for students here. Very few may receive such assistance to cover expenses of university fees alone. This establishment admits only those who are brilliant academically. Every year tens of people used to come out of Yale University with PhD in various branches. PhD is the highest qualification one can earn from this university. If you have MA, STM or equivalent postgraduate qualifications, you have to have a very meticulous study of one year for PhD. Within this one year, you have to submit a lengthy thesis apart from appearing in examinations. After this, there is a field examination in five subjects. Along with this, you have to pass examinations in French and German

assuming that you are well versed in English. Moreover, you have to convince that you are good enough in the languages Greek, Latin or Syriac. You have to collect the questions for your examinations at 9:00 in the morning and return your papers before 5:00 in the evening. You have to have grade A in some of them and grade B in others. After completion of these exercises successfully, there is a viva voce before a panel of five professors. Once you are successful here, you have your candidature for PhD. From now, you have to submit your dissertation in five years.'[3]

Varghese already had a master's degree from Princeton and therefore there was no need for a STM or equivalent. He joined Yale University as a student for PhD.

Dn Varghese intended to study Philosophy and Theology at greater depth. He acquired all his basics in Philosophy here. He organized seminars himself and presented papers as part of his learning process. The university had very eminent professors. Dn Varghese had a few seminars with them. One of the professors Richard Woom told Varghese, "Our knowledge is limited; but we are prepared to guide you and help you in your studies." Richard Woom was an authority in Patristic Theology. Dn Varghese was a bit perturbed that he was getting only limited inputs in Theology.

Many in America were aware of the position Dn Varghese held in Ethiopia and how valued he was there. He was famous in America as a leader of Bible studies. Many Protestant Churches in America respected and honored Dn Varghese. He used to participate in many

international seminars there. He got an opportunity to preside over an African seminar. Thus, Dn Varghese earned name and fame in America.

It was hot news for media that the former private secretary of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie was studying at Yale University. The daily, New Haven Register under the title 'Ex - Aide to Emperor Selassie Studies Here' published the details with a photograph of Dn Paul Varghese taking a book from the library. As part of the piece, his brief lifeline until then and his plan found prominence. What Dn Varghese said about his future plans were these:

"The Rev. Mr. Verghese plans to attend Oxford Uviversity in England following his graduation from yale in June. Completion of courses in the universities in the next two years will bring him his master of theology and doctor of philosophy degrees.

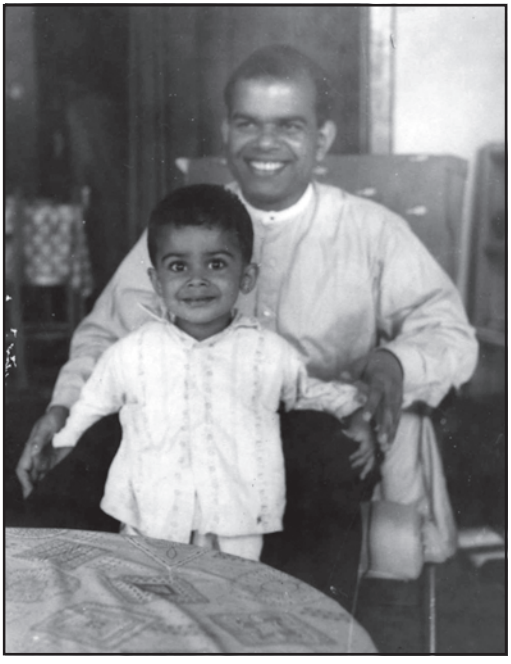
The Rev. Mr. Verghese will return to india after his Oxford graduation for a preaching and teaching at a salary of about $ 15 a month. The amount is a far cry from the $ 6,000 annual salary and free apartment offered him by an Ohio University as a lecturer.''

Prof Nelson was a teacher of Dn Varghese at Yale University. He was the Assistant Dean and maintained warm friendship with Varghese. One day Nelson exchanged pleasantries with Varghese on a casual note. Dn Paul Varghese told him, "If you want to know the truth, I must admit, I am not happy."

Prof Nelson said, "What? I would like to know the reason." He took Dn Varghese to his office and asked, "What is the reason that you are not happy?" Varghese replied to him, "I came here with a deep interest to learn the topic Patristic. Prof Talhom and Prof Neebonn are two of my Professors whom I have great regards and respect. However, the truth is that neither of them has a deep knowledge in this subject. I think it would not be possible for me to continue my studies here. But I have to study, no doubt on that." Nelson suggested that Varghese should meet the Dean and discuss.

Justin Broof was the Dean. He knew Varghese very well. He was dealing with Varghese more as a friend than a student. He heard

Truth

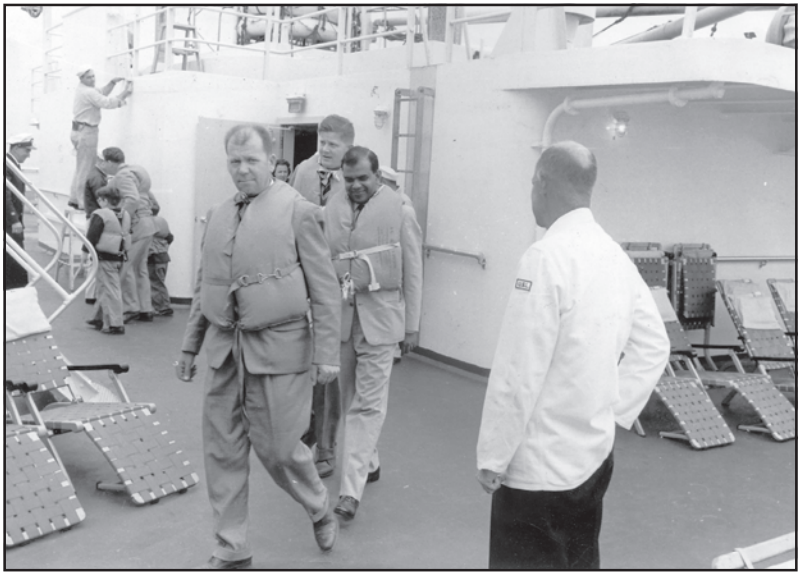


Varghese patiently and asked, "sustaining the warm relationship with us, where would like to go?" Apart from Yale University, the other three important universities in America were Harvard, Princeton and Goshen. Each of them claimed themselves as number one. The Dean was expecting Varghese to suggest one of the other universities in America, which would have been a shame for Yale. Dn Varghese was aware of this and so he said, "Sir, I am not thinking about any American Theological faculties. If possible, I would like to be with Cambridge or Oxford." This was big relief for Justin Broof. He said, "I understand you. I do have my sympathies for you. I will arrange for your further studies. I will take efforts that you get a scholarship at Oxford." He allowed a special studentship for Dn Varghese. He directed Varghese to prepare one paper each a month and read them before the faculty. There was no compulsion for him to attend classes further.

Dn Varghese was working out papers about the Theological thoughts of Eastern Church Fathers and Theologians such as Gregory of Nazianzus, Vladimir Solovyov, Sergei Bulgakov, Vincent of Lérins, Origen, Basil of Caesarea and the like for presentation before the faculties. He used to present papers and deliver lectures outside the campus too. Dn Varghese was a resource person at the Joint Campus Ministry Conference (1960 July 7-14) at Illinois. Topic for this conference was 'Christian and the State.' On September 8, there was a seminar of 'Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations' held at New York. Dn Varghese presented a paper on 'Christian Responsibility in Africa.' On January 28, there was yet another seminar on 'Sin and Forgiveness.' Here, he presented a paper on 'The Conception of Sin: Hindu Thought, a Brief Survey' which was very catching.

Dn Paul Varghese was a guest speaker at the monthly conference of the Men's Club of St Andrews Methodist Church. Again, as a guest minister, he led four services and delivered messages at the Joint Summer Pulpit Program of First Presbyterian Church and Fort Street Presbyterian Church.

At the 52nd Annual Conference of Elkhart YWCA, Dn Paul



Varghese delivered the keynote address on the topic, 'The High Price of Peace.' The newspaper, 'The Elkhart Truth' reported the keynote address under the caption, 'Future Power of China Problem Facing World, says Indian Speaker' (1960 February 11). See the piece of news:

"Describing Communist China as the most important and problem power of the future, T. Paul Verghese of India traced difficulties between these two nations in a talk here Wednesday on "The High Price of Peace.''

He appeared at the annual dinner meeting of the Young Women's Christian association.

Verghese, a Goshen college graduate, is now studying for his doctorate at Yale university. In India he was a newspaper reporter and free lance writer, teacher, lecturer and secretary of the Christian movement. In 1957 and 1958, he was special private secretary, to Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

He spoke again at noon today before the Optimist club and at 2:30 pm gave a talk on Africa at an open meeting in the YWCA.

China Restless

There are two main reasons for China's recent attacks along the Indian border, Verghese said.

First, China is getting restless and wants to assert herself. She wants to gain recognition among the nations of the world who have rejected her.

Second, he continued, 1959 and 1960 are the crucial years in India's second five year plan. If the plan is successful, the foundations of good economy will have been laid and it will be proven possible to create a great nation by democratic means. It is important for Communist China to see that India fails in establishing economic stability democratically, so China is trying to divert India's financial resources to defense.

Verghese traced the beginnings of Indian Chinese difficulties to 1951 when the question arose as to which country Tibet belonged.

South Korea Threatened

China and North Korea at that time were also threatening to attack South Korea. Attempting to prevent this, India sacrificed Tibet to China, he said, and assumed that this would satisfy the Chinese and the two nations would continue to be friendly.

Verghese seems to feel that this assumption has been the basis of the current problem. While India was content in the fact that the two nations had much in common and were friendly, the Chinese were instituting vast propaganda campaigns against India.

Several minor diplomatic incidents ensued, but still India did nothing, he continued. The climax came when Chinese troops moved across the border and shot a member of an Indian patrol.

India is determined not to go to war if at all possible, Verghese said. He does not believe China will launch a full scale attack, but will continue to needle India so that attention is focused on defense rather than building the Indian economy.

Would Admit China

India also believes, he said, that admitting China to the United Nations is the only way in which she can redeem herself in the eyes of her people and gain recognition in the world. Admission to the U.N. does not mean that nations have to approve of China, just recognize her, is India's opinion.

"Peace never comes by slapping the man who slaps you; peace comes only by understanding your enemy," Verghese said in conclusion. "The very structure, of the human world is such that we can have peace only when God is at the center and all men or related in the love of God. The only possible human existence is in one world."

All though he does not believe there is a historical precedent for peace, Verghese said the only course is to assume we can reach the ultimate goal by working toward a world community."

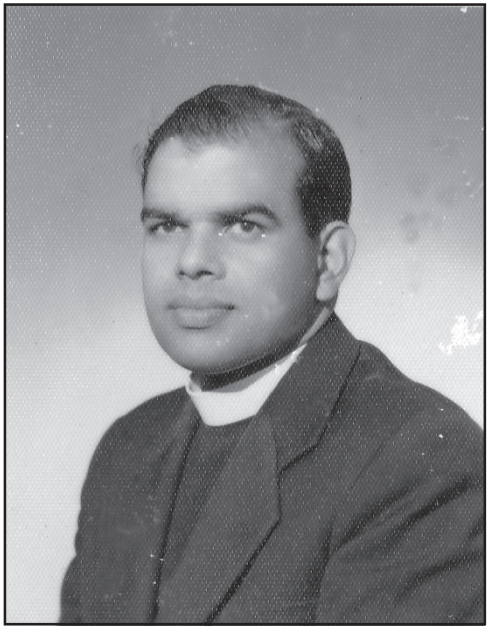
About his studies at the Yale University, Metropolitan has noted a few lines in his autobiography: "I found the facilities for theological study at Yale Divinity School not quite up to the mark, because of

colossal and I fear, some what cultivated, ignorance of vast areas of Christian history and thought and spirituality. On the other hand I found the Yale Graduate School excellent in modern western philosophy, especially in understanding German philosophers like Kant and Husserl. During this year I served also as a consultant to the Commission of Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, which gave me some great insights into the inside workings of a large American protestant denomination.''

During his days at Yale University, Dn Paul Varghese sent a letter to his intimate friend Fr K C Joseph on 1960 July 19 in which he briefs his study plans: "I am very dissatisfied with the facilities available for independent thinking and research in this country and am hoping that Oxford would provide me a kind of atmosphere in which I can do my own thinking and studying. I will work toward a D. Phill degree at Oxford, but this may turn out not to be practical if Oxford does not suit my particular interest at this point. I am also interested in getting a closer understanding of Roman Catholic thought, especially in some of its more creative new movements and therefore I would like to do some studying at the Institute Catholique at Paris or at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, but this would require French and Latin Languages which I still have to master adequately.''

On completion of one year at Yale University, they conferred Dn Paul Varghese with STM degree. In fact, he was not studying there for STM. However, the university conferred him this degree as he had completed one year there.

By this time, he got admission to Oxford University for his research studies with a scholarship. Dn Paul Varghese commenced his studies at Oxford and very shortly, he came to know that even at Oxford, there were no faculties to teach Theology of Eastern Fathers. His guide was J N D Kelly, a Western Theologian who had authored many books. Nevertheless, his expertise was with the Theology of Western Fathers; other faculty members there too were no different. They were teaching some chosen portions from Eastern Theology, but even their interpretations were incorrect. Dn Varghese used to pinpoint their mistakes and this they did not appreciate. Professors of



Yale University used to encourage Dn Varghese when he pointed out their mistakes and they used to admit them. However, the Professors of Oxford never admitted their erroneous conceptions.

Dn Paul Varghese was not happy with his studies at Oxford. Metropolitan says about his Oxford experience: "I decided to leave Yale and go to Oxford, anticipating better knowledge of Eastern theology and patristics there. I got admitted to a D. Phil (Doctor of Philosophy) program at oxford, with membership in Keble College, but living at the House of St. Gregory and St. Macrina at I Canterbury Road in Oxford. In general Oxford disappointed me - too staid, too dogmatic, too insular, too pompously unauthentic for my taste. But I had great teachers there like Michael polanyi, who initiated me into some of the problems of human knowing and intellectual certainty. My philosophical pilgrimage which began with an introductory course at Goshen, and had substantially developed at Princeton and Yale, reached a new level of maturity at Oxford. My mind developed by reacting critically to teachers like Gilbert Ryle and Ian Ramsey, Henry Chadwick and R. C. Zahner."

'At Oxford, a deadly virus attacked Dn Paul Varghese. He was almost on the verge of death. Even on this occasion, he had that mystic experience akin to what he had at Ethiopia during the attack of chicken pox. Metropolitan believed that he came back to life from the clutches of death only because of the mercy of God. Dn Varghese had differences with J N D Kelly, his research guide, on the topic and contents of his doctoral thesis. Such differences with his guide prompted Dn Varghese to undergo in-depth studies on the sharp differences between the Eastern and Western Theological visions. Always, the study of Dn Paul Varghese was strongly rooted in Eastern Theology.'[4]

The foundation of creative Western Theology was the thoughts of Augustine of Hippo; Dn Varghese learnt during 1959-60 that such a foundation itself was weak. This inference brought great relief to him. He was of the conviction that Eastern Christians need not consider Augustine as a saint. Eastern tradition had tactfully avoided Augustine. J N D Kelly was of the view that only Western philosophers

like Augustine of Hippo could handle the various issues of this universe the right way. Dn Paul Varghese could not appreciate the adamancy of his Professor and guide on these and believed that the reason behind such a stand was his incapability to assimilate Eastern thoughts. Dn Varghese had to oppose his guide when he insisted that one must learn all theories based on Augustinian thoughts as the criterion.

"Supervisor for my PhD program was Professor Kelly. He is a great teacher in Western thoughts. He has learnt a lot on ancient doctrines and has written many papers. Yet, when I was meeting him and discussing one hour every week, I came to know that he did not know these issues even one tenth of what I knew. There were certain old questions. These he would ask repeatedly. When I gave my answers, they would not agree to me; they would not change from their stands. When I criticize Augustine, they would say, 'You do not have to worry; Augustine will survive your criticism. He was a great philosopher; you are too small a man.' They told me that I am not worthy enough to criticize Augustine. Therefore, I attempted to learn more about Augustine and identified clearly five or six errors of Augustine, which I proclaimed openly. Many theologians have seen my writings and some are using them."

"Prof Polanyi was the one in Oxford whom I respected most. In a small seminar with just four people, I could learn a lot from him. With permission, we could attend the classes of other professors. There was no compulsion that one should attend a particular class. Though I was specializing in Theology, there were facilities to learn other branches like Philosophy. I learnt Sanskrit and Syriac to some extent. With personal effort, I could learn some other subjects also from Oxford."

During his days of studies, Dn Paul Varghese cooperated with other Christian denominations like Mennonites, Presbyterians, Methodists and the like. However, he had no attraction towards their thoughts or he did not turn up as their follower. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to acknowledge and accept the good elements in them. He was always in line with Eastern Christian visions, which enlightened him and energized him.

1. This is a word in Ethiopian language. It means, 'Power of Holy Trinity.'
2. "Paul Varghese takes charge" (News) *In*; Kerala Bhooshanam, December 30, Sunday, 1956, p.1.
3. Fr Dr V C Samuel, "Swanubhava Vedhiyil ", Kottayam, 1996, p. 39.
4. Dr K M Tharakan, "Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios, Manushyanum Chinthakanum", Kottayam, pp. 12-13.

5

The Scenario of Ecumenism

While Dn Paul Varghese was studying at Oxford, he received an invitation from Willem Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of World Council of Churches (WCC). 'Please come to Geneva. I would like to see you.' Varghese proceeded to Geneva and met the General Secretary. He said, "When we started World Council of Churches, most of the members were Churches on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. Now many of the Asian countries have earned independence. There are many Asian Churches as new members in the Council. Eastern Churches too are desirous of taking membership. Many Orthodox Churches in Russia and Romania wish to join as members. Therefore, I would like you to come to WCC and serve as my closest colleague."

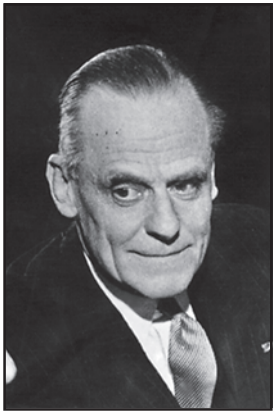
Dn Varghese said, "In general, my opinion about WCC is not very positive." The Secretary was in for a shock. Dn Varghese continued, "One, basically, it is a Western organization; two, basically, it is a Protestant organization." He said these bluntly. The Secretary could not deny these because both are bare truths. He said, "we are trying to make changes in the present set up. Therefore, you must surely join us."

Varghese said. "Just because one person joined the administration, I cannot envisage drastic changes to the policies of this organization."

Dn Paul Varghese returned to Oxford. He thought, 'This is yet another scenario of choosing the right pathway. WCC is not my way. After completion of studies, I must return to my motherland and serve my Church there.'

WCC was again in touch with Dn Paul Varghese as they were keen to include him in their staff because he was an Asian as also member of an Orthodox Church. They had to maintain a balance within the administration of the Council. Read below a letter addressed to Dn Paul Varghese on 1961 February 28 from Rev Francis H House, Associate General Secretary of WCC, marking a copy to Visser 't

Hooft:



Visser 't Hooft

Dear Mr. Verghese,

Thank you for your letter of 21st January and for sparing time for what was for us a most useful and enjoyable visit to Geneva.

The Executive of the WCC duly met February 6 - 10, and I am now able to write to you more definitely.

1) We are immensely interested in the possibility that at some time in the not too distant future you should join the WCC staff for a period. We are convinced that you could render immense service to the ecumenical cause in this capacity, but

2) We also understood from you that a) you would be most reluctant to break off your present course of study. i.e. you will be in Oxford until midsummer 1962; b) you feel that both your own convictions and your Church's plans for you require that you should return to India for a period when you have finished at Oxford, and c) that if you did join our staff at some future date you believe that your services might be more useful elsewhere than in the Department on the Laity.

Under these circumstances the Staffing Committee of the Executive felt that it would be wrong to press you to accept appointment as Executive Secretary of the Department on the Laity when Pastor Hans - Ruedi Weber leaves at the end of June this year; but that we hope you will keep in touch with us and that at some date in the not too distant future you and your church will consider the possibility of your joining the WCC staff for a period.

As you will be hearing elsewhere, it is our great hope that in any case you will be able to take an active part in the Third Assembly of the World Council in New Delhi (November 19th to December 5th).

Thank you once more for coming to see us,

Yours sincerely,

Francis H. House

cc Visser't Hooft, Northam, Weber

The first flash revolution took place in Ethiopia in 1960 when Dn Paul Varghese was studying at Oxford. While the Emperor was paying a visit to South America, the Commandant of his Body Guard and the Head of the Secret Service captured power. The Emperor returned to Ethiopia in a small aircraft and landed calmly; not even holding a small gun, he straight went to his office, took over his position and arrested his adversaries. Hearing this, Dn Paul Varghese sent a message to the Emperor congratulating his courage and intellect to overpower his enemies. Within a few days, he received a phone call from the Ethiopian Ambassador in London saying that the Emperor wishes Dn Paul Varghese to pay a visit to Addis Ababa and that he has sent the flight tickets.

It was not even a week, the Emperor re entered his throne. His adversaries had proclaimed his eldest son as the Prime Minister. Dn Paul Varghese spoke to the Emperor, the prince who was the legitimate successor to the throne, Emperor's cousin Ras Imru as well as to University students and the common people in detail. He stayed in Addis Ababa for four days and before flying back to Oxford, went to the palace to bid farewell to His Majesty.

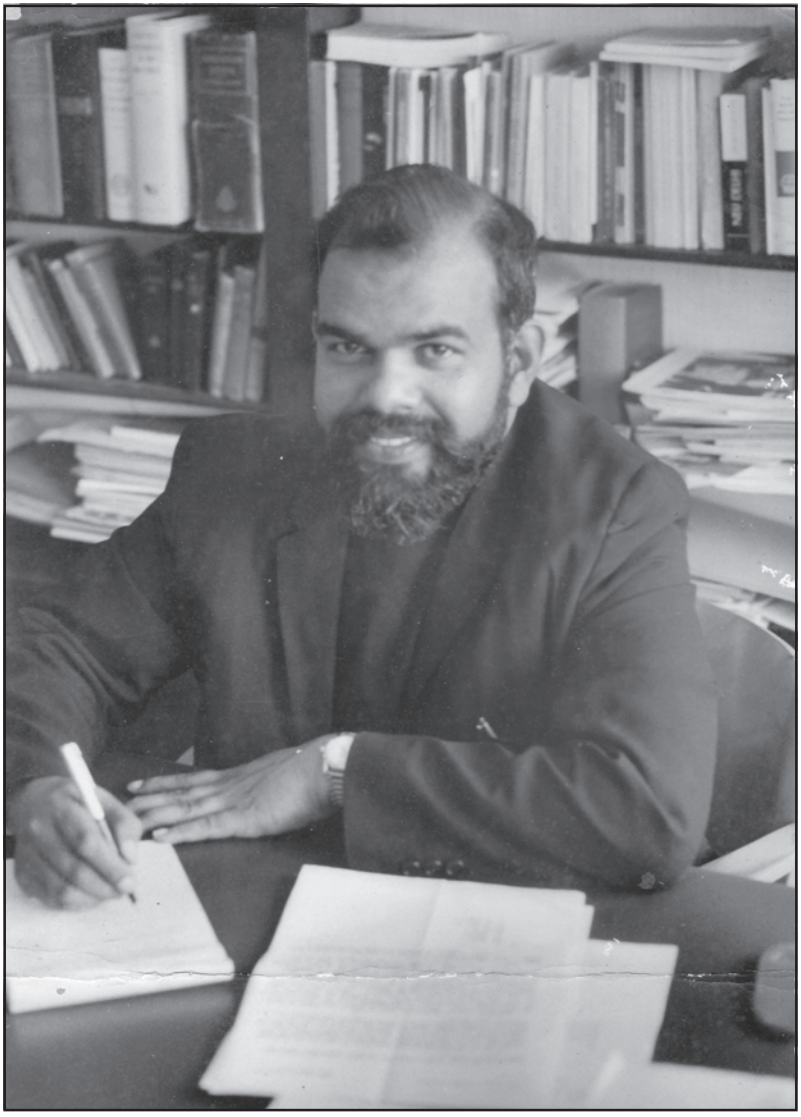
"The office of His Majesty was the same, just below the palace, close to my former office. All ministers were at the waiting room. Prime Minister was also there. The nation as a whole was in the midst of anxiety and fear complex. Just a week early, the Army and Air Force acted swiftly and overthrew the rebel government to reinstate the Emperor. Now these forces were in a rebellious mood; they wanted a pay hike. The Emperor and the Government were firm that the nation was not financially stable to accede to what they demanded. The Army was not falling in line and they were adamant that they would fight against the Emperor and his Government. If they formed the right strategy, they could raise a revolution and dethrone the Emperor and his Government."

"The Emperor was well aware of these happenings. The Army leadership had proclaimed openly that they would march to the Palace in the morning at 10:00 and submit their representations directly to His Majesty. Time now was 9:45. I was to travel back to London in the afternoon flight and therefore wanted to bid farewell to the Emperor in the morning. It was for this purpose, I came to the Emperor's office now. However, the office of His Majesty appeared locked from inside. Emperor was strolling inside with utmost impatience. Even the Prime Minister could not meet him. Then how would I get a chance to meet him and bid farewell? Anyhow, he would come out to address the Army and then I might get a chance. With this in mind, I patiently waited talking to some of the ministers. Everybody was anxious and fearsome. If the Army turned rebellious, what safety a nation would have? It was just two weeks ago, the rebels assassinated some twenty ministers and officials who were all my friends. Today, if the developments turned out to be a military revolution, more bloodshed could be there. There was no feeling of security for anyone."

Through a window, Emperor might have seen Dn Paul Varghese talking with ministers at the waiting room. Suddenly, the door opened and a bodyguard proclaimed, "His Majesty calls Mr Varghese." Though Varghese was a Deacon then, everyone in Ethiopia considered him Mr Varghese. This call was a surprise for all those who were waiting there including the ministers. Why should the Emperor call Varghese who was then only a student, while even the Prime Minister was waiting? Anyhow, Dn Paul Varghese entered the room immediately. The bodyguard closed the door.

"It is good that you are here. I cannot open my mind to others as freely as I can with you. You are my witness. You are my witness before the world and before History. If something happens to me, you have to witness it before the world."

These words from His Majesty surprised Dn Varghese; he waited silently. "It is my good fortune that you have come here. May be, in another five minutes, it can be the end of Haile Selassie. I am going to address my Army. Anything can happen. I am now coming out of



this office with the feeling that it would be the last day of my life. This is what I have to tell you. If the history of Haile Selassie ends today, you have to bear witness to the world on two counts. One, now I am moving out without fear; I am facing my Army not wearing a bulletproof vest or carrying even a gun. You are the witness that Haile Selassie did not fear anyone until his last breath. Two, the reason for my fearlessness is my faith in God. You are the witness that I lived until my end submitting myself totally to God. If I die today, you have to proclaim both these to the world."

Tear tickled in the eyes of Dn Varghese. He could perceive the seriousness of this calamity only later.

The Emperor came out of his room. Prime Minister and family members came close expecting that he might say something to them. He had nothing to convey them. Emperor moved forward without wavering; he was going to confront his soldiers. They were in lakhs. He appeared before them and spoke for five minutes in low voice, but as cool as ever. He advised them that the nation is not strong financially to sanction what they demanded and that whatever they did was for the good of the nation for which they should not demand payments.

"The soldiers heard him and applauded happily without making any noise. They saluted him and bowed before him. This small man confronted the large number of soldiers with his low voice and tranquil face courageously. Perhaps, he was imitating Alexander, the Great to some extent for he had studied his life history with perfection. Whatever be that, his strategy worked to a total success."

Based on his experiences and observations in Ethiopia, Dn Paul Varghese worked out the needs of Ethiopia as a nation as he perceived and forwarded them to the Emperor as a memorandum from Oxford. The Emperor read and sent a reply to Dn Varghese. Here is that letter:

"The Lion of the Tribe of Yehuda is victorious. King of Kings in Ethiopia Prudentially appointed one, Haile Selassie, the First.

To Mr Paul Varghese:

I am in receipt of your letter written sincerely. I have read it. I understood your interaction with Egyptian Patriarch as you passed through Cairo; I also understood what you have convinced him and your evaluation thereof. From my side, I will do the needful after careful thoughts. What you have suggested at Athens about our Church would be useful in the future. At the same time, what you have written in your letter about my services to the Church is too small.

Whatever you have suggested about the situations in Ethiopia is good, no doubt. However, to see whether such pieces of advices are practical, the one who advises so must take up the responsibility of implementation thereof. Your suggestions are matters known to European nations and some other countries also. My comments on these have appeared in newspapers. Regarding social justice, sacrificing my life like this is with the intention that people should get justice. God willing, I would like to open the University in the month of October. The final draft of its charter is enclosed. It is good that you are coming to Ethiopia for three weeks in the coming July connected with your travelling to Ghana.

1961 May 13, Haile Selassie, the First."

"There were four suggestions in my pieces of advice presented to the Emperor without his asking for them after I left my assignment as an advisor to the Emperor. (1) A conference of Eastern Oriental Orthodox Churches shall be called for at Addis Ababa. About this, the suggestions I submitted were after deliberations with Egyptian Patriarch, Patriarch of Antioch, Catholicose of the East, Armenian Catholicose and Ethiopian Patriarch. This was the background behind the conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches at Addis Ababa in 1965. On this issue, all my suggestions were acceptable to the Emperor. (2) My visit to Athens was for working out certain modalities to formalize some scholarships for imparting training to Ethiopian Church leadership with the help of Greek Church. This was also successful. Some members of the Ethiopian Church went to Greece and studied there. (3) The third lengthy series of suggestions were about freedom of expression, freedom of press, land reform laws,

reformation of the structure of Parliament and reformation of the system of governance. For this, the Emperor's reply was that I was expressing ideologies of Western nations, which had no relevance in Ethiopia; Emperor was well aware of the needs of Ethiopia and that his views on such issues were already there in newspapers. He also believed that he was sacrificing his life so that people get justice. In short, he was not willing to listen to others in matters of these sorts. (4) The fourth one was certain suggestions about the University. I too could do something in the formalization of Haile Selassie University at Addis Ababa (name changed later). This was the reason for his sending me a copy of its charter. In this matter, he had accepted part of my suggestions. Later towards end 1961 and early 1962, I had been at Addis Ababa for about four months to do certain small services without drawing wages. Again, I submitted memoranda regarding social justice and improvisation of governance. In 1961, the University students raised multi faced allegations about the Emperor during a conversation I had with them; I promptly conveyed all these to His Majesty."

"One of their allegations was that the Emperor was taking the entire money of the country and depositing with foreign banks in his personal accounts. In 1961 itself, I had informed His Majesty that students had such an allegation against him. Even I could not deny that he was not doing like that; even the Emperor could not. I had arranged to open two accounts for him in foreign banks. I asked him what should I reply to the students. Very boldly, he replied, 'I worked hard; tell them that I ate from the fruits of my own hard work.' What could I say? It was true that he worked hard. There was a limit for one consuming the fruits of hard work. When people were starving, depositing crores of dollars in foreign banks and justifying it as fruits of hard work was senseless. I was not able to reason it."

"Anyhow, I did not venture into an argument then. I conveyed to the students exactly what he told me. Nobody except His Majesty knew that the deposits with foreign banks would exceed crores of dollars. Deposits were at different places in different names. It was only in 1974, news spread about this much deposits lying in various banks. With this, his popularity started eroding very fast. The reasons

for his fall were the disclosure these huge foreign deposits and his suppressing the news of extreme famine in Valla province without resorting to any steps to address it."

The third Assembly of WCC was at New Delhi in 1961 November. The topic for this Assembly was 'Jesus Christ, Light of the World.' Dn Paul Varghese was one of the Bible Study leaders of this Assembly along with Martin Niemöller of Germany who earned fame by standing against Adolf Hitler and Prof Paul Minor of the New Testament section of Yale University. Three leaders were there for Bible Study because the organizers were dividing the Assembly into three sessions for this purpose and one leader should be there for each session. The reason for choosing Dn Paul Varghese as a leader here was on account of his reputation as Bible interpreter during those days as also because he was an Indian and member of the Orthodox Church.

Fr K Philipose, the then Vice Principal of the Orthodox Theological seminary and Dn Paul Varghese worked in tandem to create a forum for exchange of views between different Orthodox Churches and for their meeting together during the Assembly. These two had prepared a letter for this purpose as given below:

July 1, 1961

Christ is risen, Grace to you and Peace from the Risen Lord.

For the third time the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches will meet this year, at New Delhi. The past twelve years have shown us what we of the Orthodox Churches share in common with Protestant Christians and what separates them for us. The gap is not such that we can hope, barring a miracle, to find unity in faith and Eucharist with them in the near future.

But thanks to the World Council and the facilities in communication afforded by the times, we of the Byzantine and Monophysite groups of Churches are discovering each other. The gap between us is not such as cannot be hoped to be bridged, given charity and understanding on both sides, and the grace of God.

There have been conversations between our various delegates

Haile Sellasie at WCC Office, Geneva

both at Amsterdam and at Evanston, but these have been of but limited value, perhaps because the talks were not preceded by any systematic preparation.

We, the undersigned, belonging to the Syrian orthodox church of India, are anxious that we should meet again in New Delhi, and perhaps, if circumstances permit, in Kerala. But in order that our conversations may be more substantial, it is necessary that a few papers are produced and distributed in advance, before we assemble in New Delhi. We do not officially represent our Church. Neither would any of the papers to be prepared have any official authorization behind them. This should however not prevent us from opening our minds and hearts to each other in love and truth. We may have unpleasant things to say to each other, but we shall be determined to say them in charity.

This letter comes to you with the humble request that you would drop a note to the Rev. Verghese, I Canterbury Road, Oxford, England, whether you or anyone else whom you know to be coming to New Delhi willing and able to prepare a short paper on themes related to the following questions:

a. The relationships between the various primatial sees at the middle of the 5th century.

b. What are our sources for knowing what happened in the Council of Ephesus (449) and the Council of Chalcedon (451). To what degree are these accounts biased? Can we reconstruct a fairly new neutral picture of what actually happened? To what extent were the proceedings of these assemblies influenced by imperial pressure? by the rivalries between the Patriarchal sees? by social and economic parties among the peoples of the Empire? by fluctuations in the civil service officialdom of the Empire?

c. How many bishops attended the Council of Chalcedon? How many signed the decrees? What in the statement of faith of Chalcedon was found objectionable by the Monophysite bishops? Are these points still held objectionable?

d. Why did the Monophysites object to the formula ‘‘in two na-

tures after the incarnation?" What did they object to in the Tome of Leo? is the Tome still accepted by the Byzantine Churches as an official statement of the faith?

e. Do the Byzantine Churches today anathematize Dioscurus? Do the Monophysite Churches anathematize Leo? If they do, on what grounds? Can these anathemas be reconsidered?

f. Can we have a study of the Christology of the Byzantine and Monophysite Churches as they appear today in the liturgies and the formularies of sacerdotal ordination? On what points do the two Christologies differ? Are these differences irreconcilable?

g. What are the conditions that either side would advance before intercommunion can be established? What would be the place of the Ecumenical See of Constantinople if such inter-communion were to be made possible? Do the Monophysite Churches object to any of the decisions of the fifth, sixth and seventh Councils?

h. What other problems exist between the two groups of Churches?

These questions are not meant to be exhaustive, and any suggestions that you would have as to what the agenda of our conversations in India should consist of would be most welcome.

Please also let us have your suggestions as to who from your Church should write papers and on what topics.

Remember us in your prayers.

Yours in Our Lord Jesus Christ,

Fr. K. Philipose
Dn. T. Paul Verghese

There was a study seminar at Ghana in Africa from 1961 July 21 to August 8 where Dn Paul Varghese was the main resource person. The topic for this seminar was 'Confronting the New Africa.' He took Bible classes during the seminar and presented a paper titled 'A Review of Our West African Experience.' During this seminar, there were celebrations of the 39th birthday of Dn Paul Varghese. The delegates prepared a birthday song and presented it during the seminar. This song found a place in the report as annexure. This is the song:

Happy Birthday to Paul Verghese !!!

By the waters of the Gangas, just across from Taj Mahal
There was born a bearded baby who would rather preach than bawl.
The neighbors called it ugly, but his mother called it Paul,
And so began it all.

Chorus: Happy Birthday from us to ya,
Happy Birthday from us to ya,
Happy Birthday from us to ya,

Your age goes marching on!

He came across the ocean, and he came across the sea.
He saw the Land of Goshen, and picked up his first degree.
And then he went to Princeton and became a damn Yankee.

So now he's R-E-V.

Chorus: Happy Birthday from us to ya. (See above)

Now it's off to Ethiopia and to Addis Ababa,
Where he met Selassie's lassie and took dictation from her paw.
And he taught the orthodoxies how to do the cha-cha-cha
And you know that's not all!

Chorus: Happy Birthday from us to ya. (See above)

He wandered up to England, and went in to see the Queen.
He said, "Dear Liz, you'll never know how grateful we have been!''
He dusted books at Oxford and brushed whiskers with the Dean,
And got the third degree.

Chorus: Happy Birthday from us to ya. (See above)

He saw the glory of Miss Flory and was worked into her scheme.
She took him off to Africa to freeze in Aburi.
And now he's here before us, and gee girls, ain't he a dream!
Agape marches on!

Chorus: Happy Birthday from us to ya. (See above)

In 1961 September, Dn Paul Varghese was the Campus Guest and preacher at the chapel of Rice University. There was a piece of news in 'The Thresher', the newspaper of the university on 1961 September 22 titled, 'Plight of Man and the Act of God' Examined by Varghese at Chapel' which covered the activities of Dn Varghese and his upcoming journeys. Here are the relevant portions from there:

"Now a deacon in the Syrian Orthodox Church, Mr. Verghese will be ordained to the priesthood in November. Before that time, his travels will carry him to the University of Hawaii, where the East - West Center, an international college for academic work, has been established in an attempt to create better understanding between Asians and Americans.

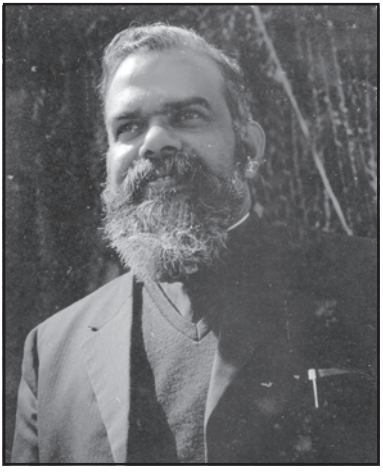
AFTER LEAVING Hawaii, Mr. Verghese will stop in Japan, Hong Kong, and Manila on his way to the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, where he will conduct Bible studies at that meeting.

Although he is pleased with the quality of students and faculty at Rice, Mr. Verghese mentioned that he finds out students somewhat diffident about entering into intellectual discussions, as compared with students in Ivy League schools. Still, he offers, "After having been in the Ivy League I am impressed with the unpretentiousness of students here."

"THE PLIGHT of Man and the Act of God" is set as the general topic for Mr. Verghese's chapel talks, which are offered both Thursday and Friday nights. His addresses this week will be "Two Archetypal Men - the Old and the New", and "Freedom, Evil, and the Law."

Dn Paul Varghese reached India to participate in the New Delhi Assembly of WCC. During this visit, HH Geevarghese Baselius II Catholicose ordained him to priesthood on 1961 November 5 at Parumala Seminary. On November 12, Fr Paul Varghese celebrated his first Holy Qurbana at College Hill St Thomas Orthodox Church, UC College, Alwaye adjacent to the Fellowship House.

"Being ordained to priesthood at the age of 40 had caused some



inconveniences; it was difficult to by heart hymns used in the liturgy as there was a tendency to forget soon. Koruthu Malpan (Malankara Malpan Njarthankal Fr N K Koruthu) was my Guru. I had not studied at the seminary of our Church. Therefore, I was not conversant with celebrations of Church rituals. This Malpan inculcated such capabilities in me at least to a certain extent. I have very few masters in India or abroad and Koruthu Malpan was one among them."

The official delegates of Malankara Orthodox Church to the WCC Assembly from November 18 to December 6 at New Delhi were Abraham Mar Cleemis, Thoma Mar Dionysius, Fr Dr K Philipose (later, Dr Philipose Mar Theophilose), Fr Dr V C Samuel, Fr Paul Varghese, former Union Minister Mr A M Thomas and Malayala Manorama Chief Editor Mr K M Cherian.

The Bible classes of Fr Paul Varghese had attendance of about 300 including many Primates of Churches such as Arch Bishop Michael Ramsey. His first class was very successful and received accolades from participants. The appreciations he received were extra ordinary. This caused some problems the next day that members of other groups thronged into the class handled by Fr Paul Varghese without permission. He conducted six Bible studies and all of them were successful. As a sequel to these Bible classes, Arch Bishop Michael Ramsey became a lifelong friend of Fr Paul Varghese in full appreciation to him.

The towering figure in Indian journalism Mr K M Cherian opined like this about the Bible classes of Fr Paul Varghese: "He is an extra ordinary man. I went to his group thinking to listen to a day's Bible class. However, the first class encouraged me to be a part of all his classes. There was a flow of delegates from other groups to Fr Paul Varghese. His classes were impressive. There may be no one in the world who can explain the mysteries of Holy Bible in such depth convincingly. He tops this field."

Metropolitan believed that he could handle Bible classes impressively because of prudential mercy. With these classes, Fr Paul Varghese earned fame globally. He received praises and honor. Christian Churches all over the world came to know about him. Even

now, there are people who recall the 1961 Bible classes among old leadership of Churches.

This incident paved way for the entry of Fr Paul Varghese to the field of ecumenism. Metropolitan recalls, "It was in the 1961 Delhi Assembly, many Eastern Churches from Russia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania took membership in WCC. There were no Churches in Asia or Africa of independent nature until 1948. Such churches were present only in Europe. During the period 1948 - 1961, such churches formed in Asia also. It was under these circumstances, all Asian countries had their churches in WCC by 1961. Until then, most of WCC members were established Protestant Churches. Once Eastern Churches joined WCC, there were more or less equal numbers of Protestant Churches and Eastern Churches in WCC."

"The delegates from Malankara Orthodox Church attending the New Delhi Assembly of WCC invited all Eastern Church delegates there to Kerala. They all came together making it a big event. The large delegation who visited Kerala included representatives from Ethiopia, Egypt, Romania and Greece. There was Holy Qurbana at MD Seminary Chapel followed by a large public meeting. HH Baselios Geevarghese II Catholicose spoke welcoming them. This visit and meeting of 1961 opened way for informal conclaves between the five Oriental Orthodox Churches and those Orthodox Churches belonging to the Constantinople family in 1964, 1967, 1970 and 1971, which led to official talks for unity between Orthodox Churches."

"A delegation from within these Church representatives met HH Catholicose and made a request: 'We have one supplication before Your Holiness; as our representative, we request you to release Fr Paul Varghese to work in WCC staff representing Orthodox Churches.' HH said, 'Everybody needs him; it is for him to take a decision.' Later, Catholicose told me, 'Since they requested us, it is our responsibility to oblige; if you can go, please go.' If I have to go, I have to give up my studies at Oxford. I told Catholicose, 'If I continue my studies at Oxford for one more year, I will get my doctorate; I have difficulties to go without completing my doctorate program. Nevertheless, if Your Holiness commands, I will go.' Catholicose

commanded and I went to WCC."

Immediately after the New Delhi Assembly was over, Fr Paul Varghese received his offer of appointment at the Central Secretariat of WCC. His appointment was as the Associate General Secretary and as Director of the Division of Ecumenical Action. Before taking over the assignment at WCC, Fr Paul Varghese spent three months in Ethiopia. During 1962 January - March, he worked in close association with Ethiopian Orthodox Church. There was a possibility that he spent these three months in Ethiopia akin to Jesus Christ spending 40 days in the wilderness before commencing his public ministry. On 1962 January 25, The 'Ethiopian Herald' published a piece of news under the title 'WCC Official Surveys Here.' This piece briefs the activities of Fr Varghese:

"Father Paul Verghese, Associate General Secretary of World Council of Churches and Director of Division of Ecumenical Action, arrived here last week to see possibilities and to carry out surveys in cooperation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, by which the World Council of Churches could help the Ethiopian church in order to carry out its missionary activities. He will be conducting his surveys in the western and South Western provinces of the country. After completing his survey project, he will work out, in consultation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, an over-all scheme to carry out the projects.

He will stay here for the next three months during which time he expects to fulfill his mission. He was sent here by the World Council of Churches which he said, willing whole heartedly to help the Ethiopian Church, either financially or personnel - wise, to carry out effectively its missionary task. He stated that there was a strong desire to give help especially by the other Orthodox Churches.

The help is directed at encouraging the Ethiopian Church to Christianize certain areas of the country where Christianity did not reach. Father Verghese said that the World Council of Churches had replied very favourably to the request made by the Ethiopian Church delegation led by Archbishop Theophilos, to the General Congress of the World Council of Churches, held in New Delhi, India, in November and December. According to him, the Ethiopian Church delega-

tion appealed for help in order to fulfil its task.

Father Verghese, who had spent five years in Ethiopia and speaks excellent Amharic with a good knowledge of Ge'ez, declared that the Ethiopian church had great responsibility in carrying out missionary activities. There is a great need for mission schools, churches, and clinics which fulfil the need of the people, he said. Asked whether the Ethiopian church could get the necessary personnel to carry out this task, he said that there are several Ethiopians who have been sent abroad for the same purpose and returned after considerable training, and are ready to carry out such a project. There are also other young people who are presently outside the service of the church but are very much interested in this type of work.

Although the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was very anxious to do its missionary task, Father Verghese further explained, it was handicaped so far by both lack of personnel with this kind of experience and also the necessary finance. "There is a wrong impression in the minds of the public that the Church is very wealthy", Father Verghese pointed out, "But this is unfounded, and its limited budget goes for its heavy administrative expenditure." He expressed his firm belief that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church now could fulfil its wishes in cooperating with the various churches of the world through the medium of the World Council of Churches.

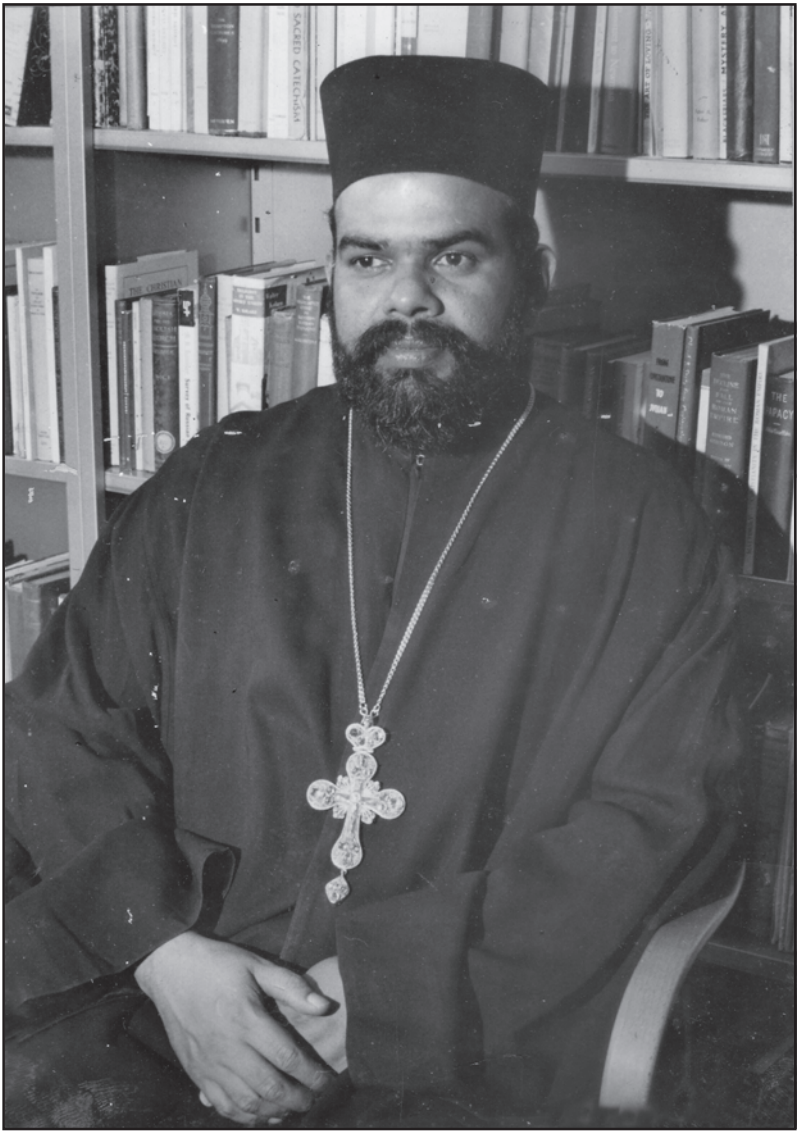
Father Paul Verghese is the first Non - white to be appointed by the Central Executive Committee of the World Council as Associate General Secretary to represent the voices of Afro - Asian orthodox Churches in the making of general policy. He, himself belongs to the Malabar Orthodox Church. Besides carrying out his mission here, Father Verghese will give a series of lectures on Bible passages and the fundamentals of Eastern Orthodox Faith, until he leaves for Geneva where his permanent office is located. He will assume his post by mid May."

In 1962 May, Fr Paul Varghese took over his assignment with WCC as the Associate General Secretary and as the Director of the Division of Ecumenical Action. He was the first Associate General Secretary of WCC. There were four departments under the Division

of Ecumenical Action. They were: (1) Bossey Ecumenical Institute (2) Department on the Laity (3) Department on Co-operation of Men and Women in Church and Society (4) Youth Department. Gradually, at the initiative Fr Paul Varghese, a new department also commenced namely, Education. Thus, Fr Varghese held the responsibilities of five departments.

"The work at WCC was tough. The systems they were following were those of Protestant Churches. Any approach initiated in variance with those was not tolerable for them and were causing frictions. Protestants did not give much importance to liturgy; they were always after hymns and sermons. The Orthodox thoughts about true liturgy were alien to their thought processes. I had a desert feeling there spiritually. No Orthodox traditions were there. They followed Protestant worship pattern throughout. During holidays, if I can go to some Catholic monastery and stay for a few days, I may be able to attend some good worship. Spiritual atmosphere at WCC was pathetic. However, my colleagues in all the five departments under me were very smart, keeping global standards. Working with them was a satisfying experience. Though there were differences ideologically, they used to extend full co-operation and do things as I direct. During those days, there were only few officials from Asia and Africa. Therefore, I had a special status and worthy position. Yet, Orthodox thoughts were incomprehensible for them mostly. Their concepts about Church and liturgy were of another dimension. However, over a period of time, may be in a few years, they learnt many aspects of Orthodox liturgy."

The next stage was indeed, adventurous for Fr Paul Varghese. However, he realized later that it was a great experience. He got opportunities to acquaint with all Churches of the world and visit them; he understood their varied problems and perceived their positives. He had an intellectual awakening by maintaining relations with leaders and thinkers of different Churches. It was highly beneficial in many ways that he was in good terms with Canterbury Arch Bishop Michael Ramsey and highly intellectual Martin Niemöller. The opportunities he had to represent WCC at various sessions of UNESCO and United Nations were manifold; he could learn a lot



about the international issues. He also got first hand perception how they addressed them at different levels. He also had exposure to handle various global issues and comprehend many of the global realities. He understood that one has to go and see what is happening in various countries politically and culturally. All these enabled Fr Paul Varghese to expand his horizon of knowledge and experience. Staying alone at Geneva, a beautiful city gifted by nature, was a new experience. He used to cook his food, wash his clothes and buy things all himself."

The first Central Committee meeting of WCC after Fr Paul Varghese joined took place during 1962 August 7 to 16 at Paris. He turned out a bit controversial at this meeting and caught the attention of all. The reason behind this controversy was a paper presented by him on 'The Finality of Jesus Christ in the Age of Universal History.' The minutes of Central Committee had noted this in detail as seen here:

"The Vice - Chairman took the chair and successively introduced Principal John Marsh, Chairman of the Committee of the Division of Studies, and the Rev. Paul Verghese, the new Director of the Division of Ecumenical Action, both of whom presented papers on the subject of this study.

The Vice - Chairman opened discussion by commenting that he had never seen more clearly demonstrated the value of presentations on the subject from different traditions and confessions. Mr. John Lawrence associated himself with what Fr. Verghese had said concerning intellectual and spiritual colonialism, and went on to suggest that a procedural colonialism is demonstrated when the World Council does its work largely through the methods and rhythms of the West. Sir Kenneth Grubb took issue with a phrase used by Fr. Verghese which referred to various aspects of Western expansions: "I know some of my friends see God's hand in all this; but I see only the wrath of men praising God." For himself, he saw both like the wheat and the tares. Fr. Verghese accepted Sir Kenneth's contention, altering the word "only" to "also."

Metropolitan Chrysostomos commented that the paper of Fr.

Verghese was more occidental and that of Principal Marsh more oriental! He commended Principal Marsh for his Christology, but regretted his neglect of ecclesiology. The finality of Christ necessitated mission in and through the Church. Bishop Lilje felt that Fr. Verghese's reference to the position of some churches for whom the university professor or the specialist in hermeneutics was 'the main locus of authority' failed to recognize the seriousness of the real problem of communicating the Christian faith in terms intelligible to modern thought. ...

Professor Niesel objected to the statement in Fr. Verghese's paper that 'It is by no means fair or honest to make the contrast between the Gospel and Religions' in as much as this contrast was made by St. Paul in Romans I and is in fact the whole message of the Bible, which is against any form of human religiosity. It is God who seeks man, not man who finds God; that is why Christ's work is decisive.

Archbishop loann felt that the ideas in these papers had been in the air for decades, and illustrated from poetry and personal experience. All history must lead to Jesus Christ. Fr. Verghese had well said that 'between God's will and his power there is no distance.' Victory could be only in his power, which is the meaning of God's providence. ...

In his reply, Fr. Verghese admitted that in writing his paper he had had two apprehensions, one regarding the response of his Orthodox brethren and the other as to whether he might overstep the charity of his Western brethren. He apologized for having been too critical; this had been for the sole purpose of sharpening the issues. Orthodox friends had said that he had been too occidental in starting from a practical rather than a theological stand point. He reiterated his intention to write a later paper on the theological question of the way in which the incarnate life of Christ affects the life and destiny of all man kind, even those outside the community of faith. In the *persona* of the Director of the Division of Ecumenical Action he had spoken not as a theologian but as one endeavouring intelligibly to address laymen. He accepted Archpriest Borovoy's suggestion of a triple

dialouge. If Western friends were so much in love with secular man, why should not Christians in the East be equally in love with their non - Christian but religious neighbour? For him, religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism were not to be equated with Law; in his experience he had seen God approaching men through these other faiths. His understanding of Christ was within the context of God's whole revelation to the world, which used the daily newspaper as well as the hymnbook, to bring his truth to men."

Dr M M Thomas says about the role of Fr Paul Varghese in the Committee meeting: "The Overall theme of the Central Committee meeting in Paris was The Finality of Christ in an Age of Universal History. It was introduced by John Marsh (Britain) and Fr. Paul Verghese (India). I felt that Paul Verghese gave a brilliant interpretation of what God does through the universalisation of history in the modern world. Especially his understanding of the way God increases suffering in the world to make people mature through the tragic mode of learning. In fact, later I published that part in the EACC bulletin Church and Society. But the Orthodox present in Paris on the whole liked John Marsh's approach. This may have helped Paul to be more sensitive to his Orthodox tradition in the future! Also his interpretation of Western expansionism contained in the sentence, "I know some of my friends see God's hand in this; but I see only the wrath of men praising God'', was challenged by Kenneth Grubb. And Paul revised the sentence to include mention of the divine providential element."[1]

The relationship of Fr Paul Varghese with Soviet Union started in 1962. His journey to Soviet Union was as the leader of second official team of delegates to visit the member Churches of Soviet Union. Seven members of the executive staff of WCC formed the team. Compared to other members in the delegation, Fr Varghese was less experienced, but the responsibility of leading them fell on his shoulders in his capacity of Associate General Secretary of WCC.

The members of the delegation were (1) Prof Z K Mathews, African Secretary of WCC and well known leader from South Africa, (2) Dr. Paul Abrecht, Director of the Department of 'Church and Society' who was working with WCC right from its beginning, (3)

Rev Victor Hayward, a member of the Department of World Mission and Evangelism, (4) Dominique Michaeli, member of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, (5) Dr John Taylor from America who was a member of the Department of information of WCC and (6) Dr. Mauricio Lopez of South America who later became President of a University in Argentina and died a cruel martyr's death in the heroic struggle against oppression and exploitation in his country.

"As we set out from Geneva there was a lot of expectation and excitement. The Iron Curtain was just beginning to lift, and all of us, particularly westerners, were eager to have a peep behind. We had been fully briefed by knowledgeable western Kremlin-watchers whom to trust and whom not to. They told us that our interpreters would always be KGB agents whose job would be to report our conversations, contacts, and activities to their bosses."

The Protestants had entrusted a 'noble' secret mission to members of the delegation. This mission was to smuggle in 24 copies of Holy Bible presented by United Bible Societies. The directive to Fr Paul Varghese was to hand over these copies of Bible to the Russian Prof Alexander Mirkasimov. He had once migrated to America and after more than a decade of years, forsook his American citizenship to become Soviet citizen again. He was working with the Foreign Relations Office of the Russian Orthodox Church. Fr Paul Varghese had to hand over these 24 copies of Holy Bible to Prof Mirkasimov without anyone else coming to know about. He kept 12 copies in his suitcase and handed over the remaining 12 copies to six of his team members two apiece.

Fr Paul Varghese and his team had a briefing that they would have a VIP treatment at Moscow Air Port without any customs inspection of bag and baggage. However, against their expectations, the flight from Geneva to Moscow landed at Kiev where there were inspections of luggage. The Customs officials were very polite in their dealings. Fr Varghese was in priestly attire. He wore a black cassock and gown above that; he also wore a shining Archimandrite's cross. The officials did not open the suitcase of Fr Varghese either at Kiev or at Moscow. However, they checked the suitcases of his

team members. They took out two copies each of Holy Bible from their suitcases. The officials surely knew the purpose of the visit of this delegation. It was very clear what they were searching. They did not bother to scrutinize further contents. Fr Paul Varghese understood that one of the staff members working with WCC was for sure a KGB Agent and that the Customs officials had prior intimation that this delegation was smuggling 24 copies of Holy Bible to Soviet Union. He also understood that they did not seize the other 12 copies from his suitcase because they gave a special privilege to Fr Paul Varghese. Very politely, the officials informed the delegation that bringing Bibles to Soviet Union was against law and that they would receive them back while they return.

There was a warm formal welcome for the delegation at Moscow. At an opportune time, Fr Paul Varghese handed over those 12 copies of Holy Bible to Prof Mirkasimov without anyone else coming to know about it. He had the satisfaction of having accomplished a mission successfully.

"The rest of the trip went along quite well. I had an exposure to many aspects of the Soviet system. We were always lavishly entertained. Our information from the West was that Soviet citizens did not get enough to eat, especially of meat and vegetables. At our own meals we experienced no shortages, except perhaps that we could not get milk for our tea. Wine flowed at every meal, and even at breakfast there was an abundant supply of cognac and vodka, meat, fish, vegetables, smoked ham, salads of different kinds, bread, butter, cheese and eggs, tea, coffee, and lemonades in many colours and flavours. It did not take us long to surmise that this was not the lot of the ordinary Soviet citizen in his own home. There were shortages, mainly of meat and milk goods, but the Soviet citizen was getting enough to eat."

"I was impressed by certain positive features. As far as I could find out, there was full employment; no one with the ability to work was without a job. All had some place to live, not much space perhaps, but none were homeless or on the streets. And rents, subsidized by the state, were very very low. Health care and education were

Orthodox Participants of WCC New Delhi Assebly at Orthodox Seminary, Kottayam.

practically free for all. Clothing, though not classy or fashionable, was not expensive. Children and their needs received special attention. Transportation was cheap, whether by Metro or bus, by air or rail, for Soviet citizens. High quality entertainment, whether opera, symphony, ballet, circus or puppet theatre was always available in the large cities at moderate prices. Athletics and Sports were areas in which the Soviets excelled. There was very little crime, at least in those days. The streets, even in the large cities, were safe at night. Holidays, even in classy hotels, were cheap by any standards, though the domestic rates were not available to foreign tourists. Essentials of life, like goods in the shops when available, were always very reasonably priced - whether food items or domestic utensils, phonograph records, stationery, books, souvenirs and so on. I kept saying to myself: "Oh, when would my country and the whole Two-third World reach this level of development!"

"On the negative side, we saw that people lacked the individual freedoms so highly regarded in the West, like freedom of protest and dissent, freedom of the press, freedom of religious propagation, freedom of criticising the government, and freedom of association. There certainly was no freedom to accumulate wealth beyond a certain point, no freedom for one family to own several houses and lands; no freedom to travel abroad when you liked; no freedom to own several cars or sometimes even one; no freedom for much luxurious living and consumption, except an occasional party with a lot of alcohol."

"There was little room for individual creativity or freedom in the arts. Thought itself, as well as literature and art, was entirely bound by conformism, enslaved by the establishment. There was too much spying on each other and punishment without trial. One heard about the inhuman methods of the KGB. The misuse of privilege by those in the upper reaches of the power scheme, the unforgivable ways in which the state handled intellectual dissent, and the violation of many basic human rights. Religion was persecuted, attacked and officially ridiculed, not only at great cost to the State, but also at the expense of truth and justice. There was religious freedom within certain limits. State law technically allowed freedom of worship, but not of imparting religious instruction to children or adults (except the Sunday morning

sermons or in the class rooms of the priest's training centres), or of propagating one's religious convictions to members of one's own family. The Russian Orthodox Church was allowed more freedom than other Christians, Muslims, Buddhists or Jews in the Soviet Union."

With this visit, the association of Fr Paul Varghese with Soviet Union started. One striking question rose up within his intellectual thought processes. Spiritual insights developed through the roots of Indian Philosophical visions are on one side; a politically socialist insight developed through a humane life that has broken its military binding is on the other side. Would not dovetailing these two lead this universe to salvation? Fr Paul Varghese re oriented his life as a long struggle to find an answer to this question. He made frequent visits to a country that had a system of governance believing in a dogma that religion is equivalent of opium that intoxicates humankind. His present visit with the WCC delegation was an inspiration and the starting point of a tireless task lasting three decades.

The life of Fr Paul Varghese at Geneva slowly turned out to be one of busy schedules. There was a small report in Church Weekly (1962 December 23 issue) about his programs as under. "Fr Paul Varghese, Associate General Secretary of WCC and Director of Ecumenical Action has started his journey from Geneva to visit Asian, African countries. He is visiting Cairo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Tanganyika, Salisbury, Uganda, Singapore and Melbourne, Perth and Djakarta; he would be attending a few meetings of the Council in these places. He will be in Kerala from January 15 to 19."

WCC staff community had only very few people from Orthodox Churches. Among these few, one was Nikos Nissiotis (1924 - 1986) who was extremely smart; he was from Greek Orthodox Church and was a close friend of Fr Paul Varghese. This friendly relationship was a great solace for Fr Paul Varghese as moving with Protestant colleagues was quite uncomfortable in many respects. Nikos was bachelor in his forties. Now, he decided to marry and Fr Paul Varghese had the opportunity to have a sort of interview with the prospective bride on behalf of Nikos.

"Nikos entered Matrimony very late. Such a decision was not easy for one who was in his forties. He was the Associate Director of Bossey Ecumenical Institute when he decided to marry. He went to Visser 't Hooft, the General Secretary of WCC to convey his decision. Dr Visser 't Hooft loved Nikos like his own son. Therefore, he had some worries, as Nikos was remaining a bachelor as also about this late marriage. During those days, administrative responsibility of the Ecumenical Institute was with me. Visser 't Hooft sought my opinion about this proposed marriage. We discussed this issue for some time and reached a consensus that I must go to Athens and have an interview with the prospective bride."

The interview was at the residence of Nikos' father. Fr Paul Varghese spoke to Marina at length and briefed Visser 't Hooft what he had observed. "Marina is exceptionally gifted and able. She speaks so many languages fluently-not only Greek, but English, French, German, Swedish and some other languages. She is also an experienced and successful business woman with high administrative competence." The response of Vissert Hooft was like this, "My God, that sound like the candidate we are looking for, to succeed me as WCC General Secretary."

Though drawing salary from WCC, Fr Paul Varghese was not prepared to pledge his brain or ideologies to them. He showed courage to express what he thought right and just on appropriate occasions. Some of the evaluations he made at the Central Committee was creating headaches for WCC leadership. To give answers to Fr Paul Varghese, the General Secretary Dr Visser 't Hooft himself had to get up frequently. These are the extracts of the minutes of Central Committee meeting held at New York in 1963; the comments made by Fr Paul Varghese and replies thereof by Visser 't Hooft are note worthy (page 20 - 21).

"Father Verghese commented on three areas on which as a member of staff and a member of a church he had some disagreement. (1) He could not accept the statement that the ecumenical movement was anything new because it was as old as the church itself. There were certain new elements in the experience of the ecumeni-

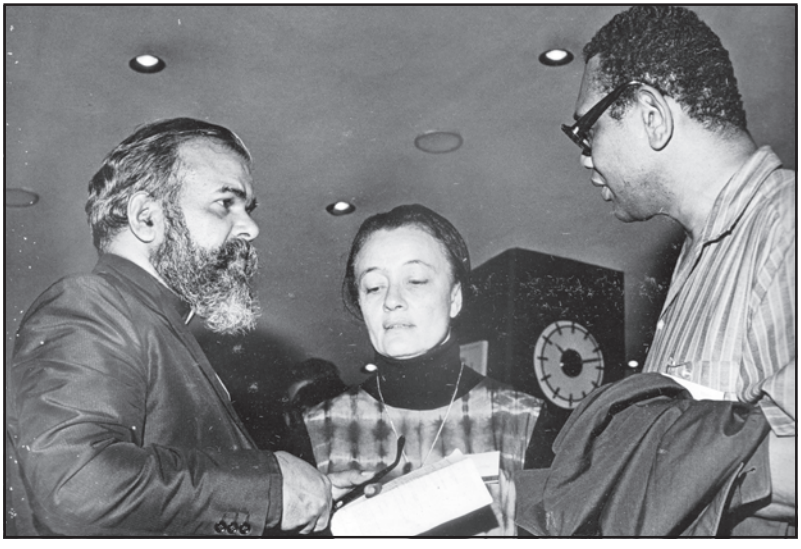
cal event, but it was not new. (2) He agreed that perhaps commitment to membership ought to imply commitment to mutual correction, but for himself be could not accept this assumption. If this had been said to the churches before they became members many would not have joined. (3) He felt that to apply the *nota ecclesiae* to the church and then to the World Council was "rather tricky." He could find *nota* all through the Church, but was not willing to describe ecclesiastical reality simply on this basis. "There is a great distinction between membership and degree of commitment and participation. There are many churches which want to remain members but have very great reservations in the degree of commitment to the ecumenical movement as it now finds expression. This is precisely what the Toronto statements guards. If we send this paper out to the churches, many of them will not answer it at all. The fact of being members of the WCC has made no difference at all to several churches in our family except as some delegates come to meetings and go back. We should make the distinction between membership and degree participation quite clear. There is a distinction between the ecclesiological significance of the Council and the 'de-ecclesifying' influence of the Council. Many who come from a tradition of fullness find a lack of fulness in the WCC. We have to live with it but we realize that we have taken the risk of breaking down fences and living within the context of a less whole but wider community. Some expression must be given to this in the document." Father Verghese maintained that the World Council could not adequately be described as an instrument of the Churches. It was the forum where the churches came together and spoke to each other; an agency through which the churches did together what they had before done seperately. It was the fellowship - a fellowship in the name of the Holy Spirit which is our Basis - within which in spite of the absence of wholeness we could still experience a richness though this was not the equivalent of the fulness which some had previously been accustomed to.

Dr. Visser't Hooft, in commenting upon Father Verghese's reference to "mutual correction", drew attention to the Message of the inaugural Assembly of the council at Amsterdam in which the member churches not only affirmed their intention to stay together but voiced their need to receive correction from one another.''

Fr Paul Varghese came to know about Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches closely and familiarized with their theological stands; he could differentiate between their positives and negatives. Yet, he continued as an Orthodox Christian. Metropolitan explains the reasons thereof very clearly. "The choice was thus made for me, first by whoever was responsible for my being born in India to Christian parents and then by my parents, who decided that I should, like them and my four brothers, be baptized in the Malankara Orthodox Church as our Church is officially known. But subsequently I made that choice my own. I could have joined many other Churches, such as the Mennonite or the Presbyterian. I had the closest relations with the Mennonites when I was a college student (1950-52) at Goshen College, a Mennonite College in Indiana, USA. Or I could have joined the Presbyterian Church when I was a Bachelor of Divinity student (later converted to Master of Divinity) at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1952 to 1954. In fact most of my theological education has been in Protestant institutions (including Yale and Oxford), and my rather comprehensive exposure to Reformation thought has only helped to confirm my commitment to the apostolic tradition as maintained by the Oriental Orthodox Churches."

"Later, during my five-year tenure as Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, I had occasion to visit and get to know at first hand almost all the main Churches of the Reformation and Eastern Orthodoxy, as well as to lead Bible Studies and conferences and seminars for them. Since most of the Protestant church leaders were also members of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, I got to know them personally."

"During these years I came to see quite clearly that the Eastern Orthodox Church had been, in many things that matter, more faithful than others to the one apostolic tradition that we all profess. I also saw when that Eastern Orthodox tradition had been unfaithful-in its excessive and sometimes exclusive authority, in its basic failure to love humanity and serve it with everything at its disposal, and in its failure to come to terms with the cultural, spiritual and intellectual struggles and frustrations of the bourgeois capitalist industrial civilization that were sweeping over global humanity. I also saw the most



unchristian power struggles going on among the Eastern Orthodox, to a certain degree more deplorably so than in the Churches of the West. Despite all these lapses in practice, my respect and love for the Eastern Orthodox tradition deepened during these years."

"I have also exposed myself extensively to the Roman Catholic tradition, both through personal friendships with distinguished Roman Catholics and by fairly voluminous reading. During the sixties and seventies I had close relations with the Vatican, first as a Delegated Observer at the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and later for twelve years as a founding member of the Joint Working Group of the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. I knew personally Popes Paul VI and John Paul I, and likewise know the present incumbent, John Paul II. I have also worked closely with some of the leading theologians of the Roman Catholic Church, in the course of half a dozen unofficial conversations organized by the Pro Oriente Foundation in Vienna in the seventies and eighties between Oriental Orthodox and Roman Catholic theologians."

Fr Paul Varghese earned fame as a Bible interpreter during his tenure with WCC. Hugh D Farley was the Executive Director of the Church World Service of National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. The following comments by him in his letter dated 1962 August 13 reveals the extent of fame Fr Paul Varghese had in those days:

"I would suggest you begin; among these papers, with the series of Bible studies that were presented by Father Paul Varghese at the recent Nyborg Consultation, Sponsored by the Division of Inter - Church Aid, Refugee and world Service. Here is an attempt to re-state the unity of the Church, underlying both mission and service, in the brilliant words and inspired interpretations of a priest of the Syrian Orthodox Church of the East from Kerala, India, who is now the Director of the Division of Ecumenical Action in Geneva. He may well be offering us a new common meeting ground to bridge the traditional gap between the intellectual West and the mystic East."

Betty Thomson comments on the talk by Fr Paul Varghese in the Central Committee meeting of WCC held at Paris in 1962: "He is

sometimes deliberately provocative, a trait not always endearing to his colleagues or to certain members of his audience who correctly identify themselves as targets. In Paris in 1962, for example, he began a speech to the Central Committee of the World Council of the Churches on "The Finality of Jesus Christ in the Age of Universal History' in a characteristic vein: "What a vague, clumsy, and uninspiring title. But then, friends, that is the way some of us theologians speak, and you have in sheer charity to put up with us."[2]

Paul W Yount, Director of Missionary Orientation Center, New York has written about the talk of Fr Paul Varghese there in 1966 March: ''A brief word of appreciation for the solid contribution you made to our program in the Sunday night and Monday presentations. I think you stimulated a lot of thinking and we are grateful for it. We have tried at various times to give our new missionaries an introduction to the orthodox churches and, while we had not really had that goal in the forefront of our thinking this time it turns out that that is just what you were able to do among other things. Your viewpoint on missionaries and missions was challenging for us and I think will be helpful in the comingdays here at Stony Point and, and, indeed, the long term service of our people."

Fr Paul Varghese delivered a lecture in 1966 March at the Program Board Meeting of the Division of Foreign Missions and Development Church World Services. However, most of the listeners could not agree with his views on Mission establishments. However, the opinion of David M Stow, one of those present, was this: "Just a line to express our very great appreciation for the extremely stimulating addresses which you presented to our program Board last week. I heartily agree with Dr. Beaver in the comment he made on Friday morning that these two represent the finest expression of theological analysis to be heard in the entire history of the Division of Foreign Missions and Department of Church World Service. We are proud to have provided a platform for such excellent statements. We are receiving many requests for copies and I am sure your addresses will have an outreach far beyond the rather small audience which we were able to provide for you. Personally, I felt that you gave a very much needed corrective to several unfortunate tendencies in current

theology of mission, and I know that many in our fellowship share my sentiments."

Anthony Hoyland says about the exhortations of Fr Paul Varghese during the Passion Week services of 1966: "Everyone is still talking about your Holy Week series - even the Clergy liked it! Can you please come and do another series for us? I know you are always rushing round so please let us know when you could come and do some more programmes for us. Let us have an itinerary of your movements and see what we can work out."

Fr Paul Varghese had conducted Bible Studies during the Uppsala Assembly in 1968. Dr M M Thomas says about these classes: "I must add that Fr. Paul Varghese led the section in a series of profound bible studies, which were most relevant to our whole thinking. He together with Hans Ruedi Weber, D. T. Niles and Bishop Lesslie Newbigin were the great Bible Study leaders of the ecumenical movement in the sixties and seventies."[3]

In 1974, Association of Christian Institutes for Social Concern in Asia had its Assembly at Hong Kong where Fr Paul Varghese participated and took Bible classes. About these classes, Rev M A Thomas has recorded like this: "The Bible classes Fr Paul Varghese conducted in the Assembly were extremely informative."[4]

Initiatives from Fr Paul Varghese resulted in maintaining direct contact between WCC and UNESCO. A delegation including four educational experts under the leadership of Fr Varghese visited the officials of UNESCO in 1966 and deliberated on the varying aspects of education. Based on these discussions lasting three days, there was an understanding that WCC and UNESCO could work hand in hand in educational matters at the global level.

Dr Malcolm Adiseshiah, an Indian was the Director of the Education Department of UNESCO. As the deliberations progressed, Fr Paul Varghese and his team came to perceive that educational wizards of UNESCO were not much aware of the subject at its depth. They have not thought as deep as the WCC experts had thought about different aspects of education. Nevertheless, the discussions

were encouraging. Dr Adiseshiah sought pardon from Fr Paul Varghese for not able to arrange a delegation on behalf of UNESCO matching the caliber of WCC delegation. Following this visit, WCC and UNESCO jointly formed an Education Study Commission. Fr Varghese served as its joint Secretary.

Being at the leadership of WCC, Fr Paul Varghese formulated a variety of programs to fight racism. He loved to enter into the midst of the tormented, the suffering, the exploited, the poor and the tribal people. Wherever he went, he rushed to the midst of such people and they enjoyed the love, affection and compassion of Fr Varghese.

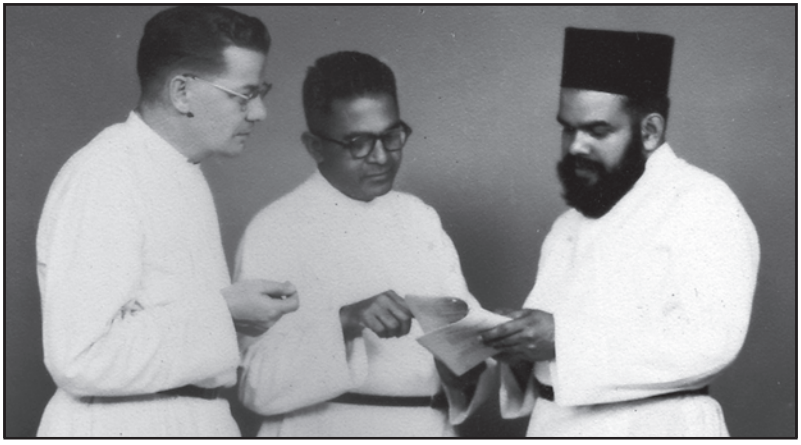
"Reading newspapers, we cannot understand anything about the happenings in West Africa. One must go there, stay there a few days, observe their day-to-day life, mingle with them for some days and then you will come to know about their real problems. Only then, we realize where they stand culturally and what are the issues associated with them. Likewise, it was possible for me to comprehend the problems and wishes of American Indians, the Blacks and those in South America by getting into them. I had more identification with this persecuted populace. I could identify myself more with the Blacks, the American Indians, the African Blacks and such other exploited sections of people. What are the problems between the financially well off and the poor? Why does poverty increase in our world? Why do some people become more and more rich and some continue as poor? I could find answers to these type of questions more during my five years' stay in Geneva rather that my stay in Ethiopia."

Representing Malankara Orthodox Church, Fr Paul Varghese took part in Vatican Council that commenced in 1962. By his visit to Vatican, he could perceive many internal affairs of Roman Catholic Church. They sought guidance from Fr Paul Varghese even to formulate documentations of the Council. He rented a hotel at Glion, a small town near Geneva and invited the team engaged in formalizing the documentation for a conclave. This was prior to WCC establishing formal relationship with Roman Catholic Church. Taking a personal interest, Fr Varghese met the concerned authorities in Rome to organize this. This conclave had influenced many of the recorded

documents of the Council. Apart from the scholars entrusted with task of finalizing the documentation, some of the prominent Catholic theologians also attended the above conclave. There were strong contributions of Orthodox thought processes in these deliberations. Fr Paul Varghese and Dr Nikos Nissiotis played key roles in this. The joint efforts of these two resulted in Catholic scholars altering some of their inherent inferences. Nevertheless, there were many who had objections also. Most of the members of WCC wanted Catholics to get along under Protestant influence. Their aligning with Orthodox thoughts and influences did not make those people happy.

"While their thoughts prioritized on Holy Trinity, Incarnation, Church and Holy Mysteries, Catholic scholars had no inclination to listen to Orthodox viewpoints. They were hearing such Orthodox thoughts for the first time at Glion. Whatever they heard there, found space in their documentations because they perceived them as true. For example, they had serious doubts as to the authority of Roman Church was with the Pope or with their Metropolitans. According to what they thought, authority was with the Pope only. Based on this conclave, they could record in the documents that the administrative authority of the Church was with the 'Bishops College.' Their thoughts about Holy Qurbana were mostly incorrect. In many matters of this nature, the conclave succeeded in bringing them to Orthodox lines. This was big achievement because the Vatican Council documents revealed these in black and white."

After the Glion conclave, Roman Catholic Church leadership used to invite Fr Paul Varghese in many of their forums. However, they took a decision later that such invitations were only for Catholic Church members. Before that, Fr Paul Varghese and Dr Nikos Nissiotis used to attend big conferences organized by Catholic Church and deliver lectures and keynote addresses. In a laity conference and in a woman's conference in Rome, Fr Paul Varghese was the chief resource person. He could contribute substantially to the activities within Catholic Church after the Vatican Council. Perhaps, Fr Varghese did much more to the Roman Church than what the Indian leaders of the Church did.



In 1965, WCC formed a Working Group for deliberating the relation between WCC and Catholic Church, for discussing the issue of Catholic Church taking membership in WCC and for implementing decisions systematically; this was a 24-member group with 12 from either side. Fr Paul Varghese was one of the important persons among the members representing WCC. Being the spokesperson for the group representing WCC he was also a Co Chairman of the Working Group. Through these discussions and deliberations also, Fr Paul Varghese succeeded in conveying lot of ideas to Catholic theologians.

"While I was with the WCC staff, I wanted to do something in the field of education. However, I was not able to make much progress. I believe that the educational system all over the world is misleading humankind. Many others think in these lines. The view of Paulo Freire is very important. Nevertheless, he did not have much of an interest in what was happening in schools. His priorities were on fighting against illiteracy. His worries also concentrated there. Illiteracy is only a minor element. Educational establishment formulates the culture of humankind. Modifying the curriculum of educational system is not easy. WCC lacked courage to take up such an issue. I attempted, but the program on education by WCC proceeded peripherally. By then, my contract period came to an end therefore, I could not succeed in my attempt."

"WCC can do just two things; come up with an idea, propagate it; that is all. Implementation has to be at the government level. WCC will not force Churches to carry out any idea developed by it. WCC will attempt to enlighten people; particularly, they will try to convince Christians and Christian Churches. Once the people accept that the current educational system needs to change, then people should come forward to change it. WCC has nothing to do further. It does not have any political power. Paulo Freire has been doing most of the things of the Education Department of WCC. But he is not keen on school - college education."

"According to the system prevailing in schools, they teach children to read and write; creativity is not inculcated; imaginative applications are not there. Histrionic talents are not cultivated. Children should be

equipped to understand the social and economic problems around them. At present, children are growing up in a peculiar scenario of books and books alone. Therefore, educational institutions are not able to open their eyes to see the realities of the world. Science and technology should be there; along with that, there should be development of culture and creativity. Children should be able to perceive reality. This was my views on education. This is not coming up anywhere; it is not happening anywhere. Even the Government of India is not accepting this. This is my unrealized wish."

"In my thinking, the educational and cultural scenario all over the world lacks creativity. Their art forms are weak in content or message. We are losing our way and go on aimlessly in educational and cultural areas. I am not saying that there are no creative and entertaining writings in art and literature. My point is that education and culture are not able to spread light in the pitch darkness that has swallowed humankind."

"I see three inter related factors that make areas of education and culture inactive or deaf and dump. These three factors combine resulting in a simultaneous alienation of individual and society. This alienation has spread all over the universe. It is unusual that such alienation is universally dominant in human history. The reason is that indigenous culture used to be self-sufficient largely and has been strong enough as much as possible that no external culture overpowered it."

"Today, the different segments of universe have combined to become a single market of consumption and a global culture to match this consumerism has come up. The situation prevailing now is such that an individual with his own creativity or a culture that is indigenous cannot keep its head high in this typhoon of global consumerist culture."

Was there any attempt to modify the structure of WCC to introduce some healthy changes within?

"The right persons to pinpoint errors within WCC were women and youth. There were attempts to create awareness among women and youth to introduce changes within; efforts were there to realign situations by effectively curtailing male domination and Western high

handedness to introduce a more humane approach. There were good achievements through the programs for youth as also with activities of Bossey Ecumenical Institute."

Could Your Grace do something for Indian Churches?

"I did not do anything for Churches in India. The Indian Churches like CNI and CSI had good spokespersons of their own. Their delegates had opportunities to address the Assemblies and therefore I did not take the role of a spokesperson of Indian Churches. Neither did I try to be a delegate for one like that. I was interested in Asian, African and Latin American Churches together. However, I did not act as a spokesperson of Indian Churches. What I cherished in my mind about India was to have inter-religious dialogues. I had made enough attempts in this direction while working in WCC staff. There were plenty of objections to this idea. European Christians are sacred to talk with Hindus or Buddhists. They fear that they would go astray with such conversations. After leaving Geneva, I could do something in this line, but it was my own efforts. An inter-religious dialogue program was there in Madras."

What were the contributions to Ecumenism from Your Grace?

"I could contribute very little; Churches were quarrelling with each other and showering abuses one to the other. I think, leaving these abuses, I could bring them together, giving stress to spirituality and worship. Like this, I could do little to form an Ecumenical movement. There was not much from side."

What were the experiences from WCC?

"I could see the world in its entirety. I could see all the Churches. I got a general impression about the various issues confronting this world in different dimensions. The three crucial problems are Science & Technology, Economics & Justice and Environment. I could gather some detailed information about the issues confronting humanity such as aggressions between nations, nuclear energy and the like. I became rich in basic fundamental information. I can talk at any forum on the problems relating any subject without referring to books. Wherever I

go, wherever I am, may be a seminar or a conference, I can deliver lectures without preparations."

Fr Paul Varghese took personal initiatives to start informal dialogues between Byzantine and Oriental Orthodox Church separated for more than 15 centuries. Dr Nikos Nissiotis who was a member of Greek Orthodox Church and hence belonging to Byzantine, worked hand in hand with Fr Paul Varghese in this matter. 'Faith and Order' section of WCC gave them good support. 'Faith and Order' section agreed to meet the financial aspects and office administration for these.

Fr Varghese and Dr Nikos met Ecumenical Patriarch and other prelates of Churches on either side to explain the plans and sought their permission for such an informal dialogue. In 1964, the first of such informal session took place at Arhus. The theologians from Byzantine Churches said that there were not many basic differences and that there were no variations in faith. They pointed out that mutual abuses were due to misunderstandings.

The second such session was at Bristol in 1967, third at Geneva in 1970 and the fourth at Addis Ababa in 1971. Of the above, in two sessions, Fr Paul Varghese drafted the agreements. He was the Chairperson in the third. Drafting of the agreement after carefully listening to the deliberations of either side or working out an agreement that was pleasing for both was a task requiring extra ordinary acumen. For this, one should familiarize with the points from both sides that could cause ill feelings to the participants or make them lose temper. Therefore, there used to be consensus that contributions from Fr Paul Varghese were necessary for drafting an agreement acceptable to both. The participants had stated openly that in one of the above sessions, Fr Paul Varghese could not take part and it was a herculean task to finalize an agreement in his absence; this statement pinpoints to a reality that the presence and leadership of Fr Paul Varghese had its inexplicable utility in these conferences.

Metropolitan recorded later the roles he undertook along with Dr Nikos in this endeavor: "We began our joint efforts in 1962 to organize the Aarhus consultation. There was much scepticism in the beginning

about the possible benefits of taking up an issue which had frustrated greater persons in previous centuries. But ours is an age of frequent ecumenical contacts, and our informal gatherings at various meetings of the World Council of Churches gave us new hope. We were both in Geneva at that time. Metropolitan Gregorios (then Fr. Paul Varghese) in the General Secretariat of the World Council of Churches, and professor Nikos Nissiotis at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey. We are very much indebted to the Faith and Order Commission which consistently supported our efforts, viewed our meetings as a primary concern towards re-establishing Church unity and financed them. We are especially grateful to Dr. Lukas Vischer, former Director of the Secretariat of the Faith and Order Commission, who gave us encouragement and support and also took an active part in all four meetings."[5]

Based on these four informal sessions, it was possible to arrive at a comprehensive agreement, though at an informal level. The agreement highlighted two crucial inferences; there are no differences in faith, there are no theological hindrances in establishing mutual Holy Communion. All the Churches involved received copies of this agreement. For a long period, Churches were silent on this. However, both these Orthodox families commenced dialogues at the official level later.

These formal dialogues are continuing. The formal discussions held in 1989 at Amba Bishoy monastery in Egypt consented to a basic unity in faith related matters. In this Chalcedon and non - Chalcedon dialogues, Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios was one of the main architects to formulate the Doctrinal document on Christology acceptable to both sides. Therefore, the Metropolitan had the satisfaction to see that the mission he initiated was moving a fruitful way. This made him content and satisfied. The formal dialogues in 1990 have reached a crucial second stage.

Fr Dr V C Samuel also had played a crucial role in taking this endeavor forward. Metropolitan briefs the contributions of Fr Dr V C Samuel: "Fr Dr V C Samuel has played a unique and pioneering role in making Oriental Christology intelligible as well as acceptable

WCC Official Delegation at Mosco (1962 October)

to others. Most of us who came later into the debate about the nature of Christ owe our basic insights to his outstanding work at Yale University in the fifties of 20th century. ... Fr Samuel's brilliant work lays the foundation for this. Much work, however, still needs to be done to make Christology and Pneumatology truly life giving and unity creating."

The Central Committee of WCC met in Eastern Nigeria of Africa during 1965 January 12 to 21. In this meeting, Dr Bliss, Chairman of the Division of Ecumenical Action profusely congratulated Fr Paul Varghese. This is what we have in the central Committee minutes: "Dr. Bliss said she would ask Father Paul Verghese to present the report of the Division, and paid tribute to the leadership he was exercising in all its concerns. The Divisional task was being eased by the growth in strength of regional activities, and through its committees, consultations and working groups it was therefore able to give more time to its task of stimulating ideas and encouraging hard ecumenical thinking."

Fr Paul Varghese succeeded to organize a conference of the Prelates of Oriental Orthodox Churches in January 1965 at Addis Ababa. Pope Cyril VI, Yakob III Patriarch, Vazgen Catholicose, Augen I Catholicose and Patriarch Theophilose of Coptic Church, Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, Armenian Church, Malankara Orthodox Church and Ethiopian Church respectively were present at the conference that lasted for ten days. This conference was indeed historical. At the initiative of Fr Paul Varghese, the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie convened the conference. This paved the way for mutual co-operation between Churches keeping aloof all these centuries without having any contacts or relationship. With this, a new friendship and fellowship started among them.

The interest taken by Ethiopian Church and the Emperor Haile Selassie contributed to the successful conduct of the conference. The conference was unique in its proceedings and its nature. The conference took decisions on mutual co-operation, ecumenical witnessing and contemporary global issues. Formation of a permanent body of these five churches was a notable development. In addition,

the conference called upon for mutual understanding and co-operation in all possible areas with other member Churches of WCC as well as with Roman Catholic Church. There was a decision to form a separate body including stalwarts in the field of education, clergy and laity with the purpose of cooperating with Christian educational activities and to work out a common curriculum for the five churches. The conference ended with a stress on unity with Byzantine brother Churches of the Orthodox family.

While he was a front line activist in the field of Ecumenism, Fr Paul Varghese took keen interest to take part in the meetings of youth and student movements and provide them intellectual and spiritual leadership. He was the main resource person at the second All India Youth Assembly held at Jabalpur in 1965 December. Chaldean Church Bishop Dr Paulos Mar Paulos recalls this incident, "I was seeing Metropolitan for the first time in 1965. I was a student of Theology at Serampore then. I met Fr Paul Varghese at the Youth Assembly held in December 1965. He was the main resource person there. When he was moving to the pulpit to address the Assembly, the Chairman of that session stood up and conveyed, 'Fr Paul Varghese elected as a Metropolitan.' I still recall well the clapping of hands and the expression of joy all over there. Before he commenced his talk, he said, 'I am happy at this news; but I do not expect my ordination to take place in the near future.' The tidings of his message that had excited many of the young men and women gathered there still remains in my memory."[6]

Fr Paul Varghese participated in the SCM Triennial Conference during 1966 December 22 to 30. He delivered a lecture there on the topic, 'Secularism in Asian Community.'

Many in Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, stuck in disputes and legal wrangles, saw Fr Paul Varghese as one capable enough to take the Church forward spiritually. Therefore, efforts were active in choosing him as a Metropolitan of the Church. This move was live even at the time Fr Paul Varghese was serving with the WCC staff. Consequently, the Malankara Association that met on 1965 December 28 at MD Seminary, Kottayam elected him to be a Metropolitan of the Church.

About the election, Malayala Manorama in its editorial of 1965 December 31 under the title 'Election of Episcopas', states this, "It is really an important fact that the five names put forward by the Managing Committee had overall acceptance. This is an indication of Divine guidance. Among the 3,000 odd delegates representing all the parishes of the Church at the session, none had any differences of opinion about the suggested five names. This is a fact all the Metropolitans of the Church and the newly chosen five have to be bear in mind with due importance. All these names came up one by one as decided by Managing Committee and opportunities provided to express views of the delegates, positive or negative. After this, election proceedings were unanimous.

The parish representatives had met together at the Diocese level; there were discussions and deliberations with opportunities for expressing independent views before attending the Association meeting. Meetings at each Diocese were under the leadership and supervision of Diocese Metropolitan. The suggestions those came up at such meetings at the Diocese levels came before the Managing Committee where all Metropolitans were present. Managing Committee discussed such suggestions. The nominations came from Dioceses were more than five and therefore, there were discussions that based on the votes each polled at the Diocese level, top five should have the chance. However, there was no consensus on this, which led to the formation of a subcommittee to come up with suggestions. This subcommittee consisted of all the Metropolitans and one representative from each Diocese. These discussions lasted more than a week. Each Managing Committee member had opportunities to convey his views. Thus, an in-depth and meticulous exercise went on; detailed examination of the backgrounds of each candidate took place; at the end, the subcommittee came with their panel of five honoring the recommendations from Dioceses. This suggestion again came to the Managing Committee that met the previous day of the Association meeting. After the approval of Managing Committee, the five names came up before the Association. As the will of people were almost clear here, the Association elected those five unanimously.

There are a few more facts that reveal that this selection was Will of God. Of these five, four of them are associated with Theological Seminary or with educating clergy. The fifth one is holding a responsible position at the Head Quarters of a Diocese. It is worth noting that none of these five Looked forward to become a Metropolitan; none of them did any sort of canvassing directly or through friends; none of them resorted to any deeds to come to the forefront of this selection process. On the other hand, they had expressed their lack of interest for this position. In spite of all these, Managing Committee including all Metropolitans and the Association unanimously favored these five revealing Will of God. All concerned must see this in this perspective. No one shall now deny these selections. The decision was unanimous at all levels from the subcommittee, the Managing Committee and the Association. Association could have rejected the recommendations of Managing Committee, but despite the differences some had, they did not. Thus, it is certain that the Holy Synod too will accept these."

Fr Paul Varghese had requested some of his friends to discourage any move, if there, to include his name among the candidates for selection of new Metropolitans. Malayala Manorama Chief Editor K M Cherian had written a letter to Fr Paul Varghese on 1966 January 15 after the meeting of the Association in which we have some information about this. K M Cherian and a few others tried to see that the name of Fr Paul Varghese was not included, but concerned persons did not accept their interference. The letter is here:

"I have been wanting to write to you ever since the episcopal election. After the election it became clear to me that none of the elected candidates have any choice but to accept the call of the Church whatever might be their individual disposition. I saw Philipose Achen after his meeting you at Cairo conference and I am glad that you also have taken this view about the election.

I may assure you that I tried my best at different electoral levels (at the Kottayam Diocesan meeting, at the Managing Committee meeting and above all at the close meeting of the special committee of the Managing Committee) to represent your view and prevent these bodies from recommending your name to the Association. Your

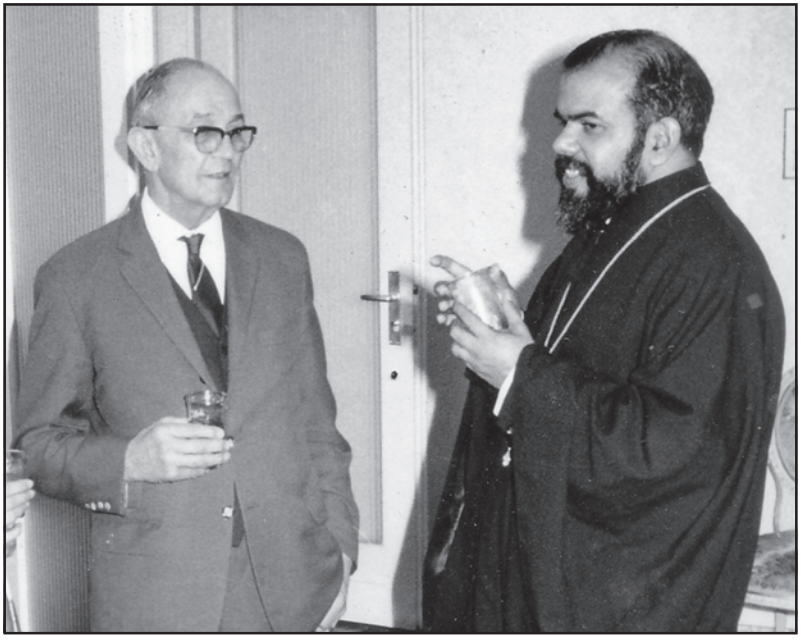
friends like Baby and others at Niranam and Quilon succeeded in keeping your name out of the respective Diocesan list respecting your feeling that you should now be embarassed. In spite of all these well meant effort, by you and by many of us your name has been accepted at all levels and after the enthusiastic and unanimous support of nearly 3000 delegates of the Association it is now certain that it is God's call for you and also for the other four and that you have no choice but to accept it with great humility. A strong synod united in love and humility will be able to revitalise our church in a manner no other body can. Only such a Synod can recreate our lost vision for one whole united church for All - India."

The reply from Fr Paul Varghese to K M Cherian on January 21 says: "I was rather surprised to hear the news from Thommachen and then from the newspaper. Since I have not been officially informed about the election the question of accepting or rejecting does not arise at least for the moment. You are right in saying that I am not in a position to say no to a call of the Church, but I still hope that the Church will except me for consecration for some years to come and that the four others will be consecrated as soon as possible. I am grateful to you for your efforts in my behalf to keep my name out."

Those who were visualizing the spiritual uplift of Malankara Orthodox Church were hopeful and with full excitement at the selection of Fr Paul Varghese as Metropolitan. Fr K C Thomas (later, Thomas Mar Macarios) who was doing his doctoral researches staying at the Virginia Seminary in America wrote to Fr Paul Varghese, "Received the encouraging and enlightening information through letters from Kerala that respected father is one among those to become Metropolitan after the meeting of Malankara Association. I praise the Almighty for this selection, which many were waiting for long. Let me extend my sincere and heartfelt congratulations. It is natural that our people expect new developments after each selection of these sorts. Let me join many others in praying for you that you do good and noble service in God's vineyard and satisfy the expectations of people; let the Almighty strengthen your hands.

When we met at Delhi on one or two occasions, you had shared your views on setting up a monastery in Eastern lines. I would be

Visit of U Thant (UN general secretary) to the WCC, 1966. Left to right: Dr W. A. Visser't Hooft, U Thant, Dr. Elfan Rees, O. Frederich Nolde, Fr. Paul Varghese



happy to have more details about this as you visualize. We, those who are studying in America, discuss this whenever we have opportunities to gather. I would be happy to have your thoughts on this as and when it suits you."

WCC Associate General Secretary Fr Paul Varghese had a name globally as famed Bible interpreter, sensible philosopher, great visionary, theologian of depth and in many other respects; news of his selection to the position of Metropolitan spread all over like a wildfire. The news of his selection found prominent coverage in Release of the NCWC News Service, American Review of Eastern Orthodoxy, Christian Century and the like. There were unprecedented flow of congratulations from every nook and corner and he found it hard pressed to respond to all of them in his busy schedule.

On 1966 March 2, Mrs. Theodore O Weddle, a former Associate General Secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA wrote to Fr Varghese: "I had heard, of course, of your election to the episcopate and of your great reluctance to accept this. I can surely understand after the wild life you have had to lead for the past ten years that you would long for a settled existence and a chance to follow your own interests. However, I am not at all sure that you can argue with the Holy Spirit or with the tremendous gifts of leadership which God has given to you. You will be very much in my thoughts and prayers as you have to face these great decisions."

On 1966 January 24, Fr Varghese replied to a person who had congratulated him; the relevant portions thereof are notable: "My election to the episcopate was done by my Church contrary to my express request to be allowed to continue to work as a priest for atleast 10 more years. I do not think that I will be consecrated in the coming year or so. I do appreciate, however, your good wishes and prayers."

There were some people at the leadership of the Church then who advocated a view that though the Association was unanimous in selection, two among the five namely Fr Paul Varghese and Fr M V George need not be ordained to Episcopate. Only a few people had this view, but they were strong in the system to move things the way they liked.

There were two funny reasons that prompted them to think in this line. One, both Fr Paul Varghese and Fr M V George possessed affinity towards Protestant ideologies. Two, the mother of Fr Paul Varghese was a mental patient and that the father of Fr M V George was a Protestant earlier.

The Church leadership did not communicate his selection by the Association to Episcopate in writing. However, the leadership entrusted Fr K Philipose (later, Philipose Mar Theophilose) to seek his views on this. Fr Philipose was also selected by the Association to Episcopate. He visited Fr Varghese and discussed the matter. Fr Varghese explained his stand specifically to Fr Philipose. He clarified that he did not deserve this position as Metropolitan and that the present service he was doing was more satisfying to him and therefore he did not need this position.

Fr K Philipose returned and communicated the stand of Fr Paul Varghese. Those who opposed the elevation of Fr Paul Varghese were very happy. At the next Holy Synod, these people actively moved their pawns when the discussion of ordination of new Metropolitans came up. Thus, the Holy Synod conclusively arrived at a decision not to elevate Fr Paul Varghese and Fr M V George for the time being. In effect, by this decision, Holy Synod vetoed the unanimous selection by the Association. This caused many disputes and exchange of words within the Church, but the Holy Synod stuck to their stand.

Fr M V George (later, Geevarghese Mar Osthathiose) who was among the five along with Fr Paul Varghese says about the above incident: "When the Association chose five priests to the Episcopate, I was one among them. However, the Holy Synod vetoed the selection of Fr Paul Varghese and me. This veto was very much beneficial to both of us."

The Church historian Z M Paret has recorded this incident in his book, *Malankara Nazranikal*: "Association selected five priests to be elevated to Episcopate; but, Holy Synod accepted only three in this. 'By such decision, Holy Synod has insulted or belittled the general will of people. This was a strategy by the Holy Synod to cement the authority of Metropolitans in our Church. We are not prepared to fall

in line with this strategy. Unless the Synod elevates the two to Episcopate, there would be an agitation throughout the Church and in the high tide of such an agitation, Holy Synod and the current Metropolitans would flow away.' There were threats going on like this. There were demand and commands as to why the two, whom people chose, were not in the final list of Synod. To overpower the Holy Synod, efforts were live in a political style by making noise and issuing threats. Nevertheless, it was clear that Holy Synod did not do anything overstepping its authority. Because of this, the Synod maintained a calculated silence. The allegation that the Synod insulted and belittled those two priests also did not excite the Metropolitans; silence alone was the strategy or response from Holy Synod. However, it is a happy sign that the two priests did not interfere in any of these either way. They even did not resort to any steps correcting the agitators who raised issues seemingly for them. Gradually, the agitation subsided. Yet, there can be a spark in the residues of ashes."[8]

K E Mammen (Kandathil) and a few others raised this issue in the Managing Committee. K E Mammen says about this: "The Holy Synod declined the selection of Fr Paul Varghese and Fr M V George to Episcopate. In other words, they took a stand that these two priests need not be elevated to Episcopate. I was under the impression that our Church would be enlightened more spiritually, growing the right way with these two becoming Metropolitans. The reason why the Holy Synod chose not to concur with their selection was that they have Protestant leanings. I openly said in the Managing Committee, 'Spiritual Murder, out of Spiritual Jealousy.' Paret Mathews Mar Ivaniose Metropolitan asked me, 'do you allege that we committed murder?"

There were heated deliberations and arguments in the Managing Committee. Thereafter, an appeal went to The Holy Synod that they might re examine the issue. The issue came up in the Working Committee meeting of 1966 January 23 and they repeated the request of Managing Committee.

The issue came up once again in the Managing Committee meeting of February 2. Here, the Association Secretary gave a reply: "The

Holy Synod considered the appeal of the Working Committee that met on January 23 and decided not to accept the selection of Fr Paul Varghese and Fr M V George as the majority did not concur with their selection."

Again, many Managing Committee members demanded re examination of the decision of Holy Synod. Accordingly, one more appeal was preferred before Holy Synod. Questions came up in Managing Committee as to whether there could be a re examination. President of the Synod emphatically stated, "Holy Synod has decided not to have a re examination."[9]

Neither Fr Paul Varghese not Fr M V George attempted to oppose the findings of Holy Synod. They did not try to encourage or discourage those who had been arguing for their sake.

As his tenure of five years was ending, WCC leadership requested Fr Paul Varghese in writing to continue for another five-year term. Fr Varghese denied their request and left WCC in 1967 August. The Holy Synod that met at Catholicate Aramana, Devalokam on 1967 January 3 had appointed Fr Paul Varghese as the Principal of Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. Accepting this appointment, he came to Kerala.

Those who valued the services of Fr Paul Varghese and recognized his capabilities were sad that he wound up his services at WCC. Robert G Mayfield, General Secretary of the General Board of Lay Activities of Methodist Church wrote to Fr Varghese: "It was both a joy and a sorrow that I read the contents of your letter. I can understand the pull on your heart to return to India to serve your fellow countrymen. For this I admire you beyond words. On the other hand, I have a deep sense of sorrow when I contemplate your leaving the staff of the World Council: Your leadership has been outstanding. Your life and your wise counsel have always been an inspiration to me. We shall deeply miss you after May 1967, but it will always be our prayer that God will guide you in the days of your new work."

Fr T J Joshua, Senior Member of the Faculty and later, Vice Principal of the Orthodox Theological seminary had written, "Holy Synod appointed Fr Paul Varghese as the Principal of the Theological

Seminary in 1967 while he was holding the position of the Associate General Secretary of WCC. It is a gain for the Seminary to have his service and leadership, as he is one of the recognized Theologians of the world and a noteworthy exponent of Eastern Theology. Many students from other countries have expressed their desire to come here and learn under him. A program in this line is being chalked out."[10]

Fr Dr K M George, a student of the Seminary at that time and its Principal later, has written about the situation prevailing when Fr Paul Varghese took charge as Principal. "Then, Seminary was confined to a four way building with a courtyard at its centre and the completed lone floor of a new block being constructed. Fr Paul Varghese started staying in this new block as its consecration was over. The construction of the new block had commenced in 1963. The then Principal Fr K Philipose and Fr Paul Varghese had worked to raise finances from abroad for this construction. Fr Paul Varghese working with WCC had raised some funds for this from Geneva."

His assignment as the Principal of the Seminary made Fr Paul Varghese happy and content on two counts. One, having got an opportunity to teach full time or part time and two, for the opportunity to mould the life and thoughts of students who are getting prepared for priesthood.

Fr Paul Varghese reached Parumala on 1967 November 2 to participate in the Feast of St Gregoriose of Parumala. An aged priest there acquainted with Fr Paul Varghese. "Where are you coming from?"

"I am from Kottayam."

"What is your name?"

"I am Paul Varghese."

"O! You are Paul Varghese. You are an idiot. Who else would give up all you had there and come back here?"

'Most of the men look forward to having good earnings and physical comforts. I was pictured as an idiot as I gave up all facilities

I had abroad and came here to work for the Church. It should be possible for us to work for the Church as an idiot before the eyes of this world.' The Metropolitan used to tell this incident while blessing his students moving to the field for serving the Church.

"I came to the Seminary in 1967 and HG Dr Philipose Mar Theophilose Metropolitan handed over the charge to me. At that time, there was no balance in the account of the Seminary. Moreover, there was no rice in the stocks to provide food for the students next week. Therefore, after taking over as Principal, the first thing I did was to pay visits to P C Abraham, Oppoottil Kunjachan and K M Mathew to collect rice. These three gifted abundantly and there was no problem for the next week. From such a stage, Seminary had grown to this level and the mercy of God was the only driving force. I had a vision about the Seminary. I tried my best to implement that vision. I envisaged the seminary as a learning house. I made it a community. Students and teachers are to live as one family, with open mind, sharing everything and all thoughts; they can criticize me. Forgiving mutual errors this way and that way, we lived together as one family. This way, I nurtured the foundation of the Seminary. The period 1967 - 72 had this structure for the Seminary. It was a single community. There were no quarrels. There were no quarrels between students, between students and teachers and between teachers. If at all some differences of opinion came up at any level, I used to address it by hearing both sides and arriving at a settlement between the two. Thus, the atmosphere was that of a community which had its base in prayer and spirituality. However, after this, from 1972 onwards, there were lots of problems and disputes in the Church. Consequently, the concept of a single community lost its sheen; the spiritual foundation of the Seminary vanished."

In his reply speech during the celebration of Metropolitan's 70th birthday, His Grace expressed his desire to bring back the single community concept and hoped that it was a possible reality.

After taking over the responsibility of the Seminary, in 1969 February, Fr Paul Varghese wrote a letter to his friends; he expressed his plans as what he would like to do at the Church level and at the

global level. He also narrated his responsibilities at the Seminary and the status of the seminary. This is the letter:

"It is time I let you know that I do exist. I left Geneva in August 1967 full eighteen months ago. And I have not written to many of my friends - even to those who have been good enough to write me twice in the interval.

Here at the Seminary, things have been moving fast - at least by Indian standards. We have now a new building thanks to thousands of people who have given so liberally, both here and abroad - 44 single rooms, 6 faculty rooms, a student lounge, an auditorium which can seat 400, a spacious library and reading-room, 4 class rooms, administration offices and the Principal's quarters - all that packed in to one 'L' shaped building. It is just right for our small Seminary of 50 students and ten teachers. We wonder how we managed when all we had was an antique 3-storey building (150 years old) where we used to pack five and six students to a room! We haven't paid all our bills. We need another $ 20,000 to pay the builder and get our furniture.

Of course there is much more to do here than I have been able to. The Building is only the starting point. Now we need a few good teachers and then perhaps some better quality students to benefit from the building and the faculty. It looks like both faculty and students will begin to get better in another two years time. Then I hope I can go and get started on something else!

What do you think I want to do next? Certainly not be a bishop or a big church administrator. You would hardly believe me if I told you what I think I want to do.

I am not world-weary, but I do want to get away from it all. The world is complex but I think I can manage to live in it without being completely thrown over. But if I want to live in it with perspective I need to withdraw for a while to a disciplined community of solitude, reflection and prayer. I see quite clearly that overcoming self is the greatest victory a man can win. I also see that I myself am not making much progress there; neither do most of the people I see around

me in the world. The toughness of a disciplined and strong human will is the ingredient without which there cannot be any real salvation for society or individual, and that will can be shaped best in a modern monastic community.

Well, Well, let me not upset you too much. I only wanted to say I am living on, as peculiar and eccentric as ever. I enjoy my work despite many frustrations. I travel often (five times a year outside India seems to be in the average) and get intellectually bored even oftener.

Yet life remains worth living. Mainly because He is there like a Rock- dependable, the only really dependable reality in the flow of time. Perhaps also because men are men. The boys and my colleagues keep me engaged and stimulated.

I edit a journal on Higher Education which relieves the monotony of theology. I have a couple of books due to various publishers - that helps to keep up the tension. In a few weeks I should complete the last Chapter of "Man and Freedom." Two other books are on the Oriental Orthodox Churches. If I were in a monastery I could easily produce two or three books a year without too much strain.

Indian conditions of food and climate detract from my already limited capacity for work. Right now the temperature is 34° centigrade, and we are in Lent, when we take only two light meals a day.

Easter is coming up soon. There is no other way to the Resurrection except through suffering and death. How hard a lesson that is to learn! Hope in the midst of life's hardness - that is what keeps the horizon illumined and beckons me on. May the Risen Christ meet us all with joy and greet us with Peace.

Do write and let me know how you are.

Cordially yours,

As the Principal of the Theological College of Indian Orthodox Church, the Metropolitan took lot of efforts to earn global fame for it, which were praiseworthy. The progress this Seminary achieved after His Grace took over the reins is phenomenal. Presently, the Seminary

has adequate buildings any community can feel proud. Aligned with the Seminary, 'Sophia Centre' and 'Sruthy' came up; these provide short-term training in different faculties. Now, the Orthodox Theological Seminary is a first grade college affiliated to Serampore University. Students can earn BD, MTH and PhD from here. This has a high position among Theological seminaries India.

Another achievement of His Grace is having formulated a curriculum for the Seminary coordinating the subject coverage matching Orthodox faith. Another contribution from the Metropolitan was the formation of a byelaw for the governance of the Seminary with the approval of Holy Synod; this provides periodic meetings of the Governing Body to take timely decisions on the affairs of the Seminary and monitoring the progress on time bound basis. Almost all the members of the Faculty today are students of His Grace; the Faculty had opportunities for higher studies and thus a strong teaching community came up meticulously molded by His Grace.

While Fr Paul Varghese was working with WCC, Seminary received financial assistance from WCC for constructing the Southern wing of seminary complex including library, classrooms, auditorium and hostels. As the strength of students increased, His Grace took efforts to improvise the infra structure for which funds came up and a three story building was the result on the North side with a mess hall and a hostel.

Metropolitan did not think to confine knowledge enrichment to clergy category alone. It was the vision of His Grace to formulate a scheme to provide basic education to laity in Theology and Christology and thus, the 'Divyabodhanam' study program came up in 1984. The first President of Divyabodhanam program was His Grace (1984 - 1996). His Grace organized finances to publish the books for this program. As of now, about 35,000 men and women have benefitted from this program through the Certificate, Diploma and Graduation courses called POCE, DOCE and GOCE respectively.

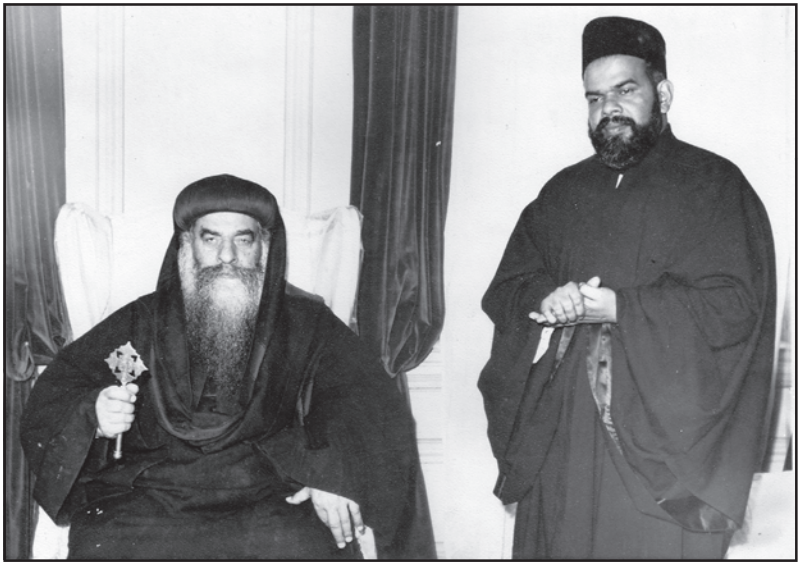
The program Divyabodhanam provides education to all members of Orthodox Church in Holy Bible, Doctrines of the Church, Worship, Ethics in Life and such other matters. There are 30 books published

for the systematic conduct of this program at the above three levels. His Grace took this initiative with a committed conviction to see that Theological awareness shall not be for clergy alone, but all our interested men and women must have it. This program is definitely a crucial milestone in the growth process and development of Orthodox Church. Metropolitan took leadership to work out the modus operandi for commencing the Graduation program (GOCE) under Divyabodhanam during 1995 - 96. His Grace found time to prepare the first textbook for this *Paurasthya Sabha Darsanam*. However, His Grace could not see the release of this book and the launching of this graduation program. The inauguration of GOCE was on 1997 February, three months after His Grace left for heavenly abode.

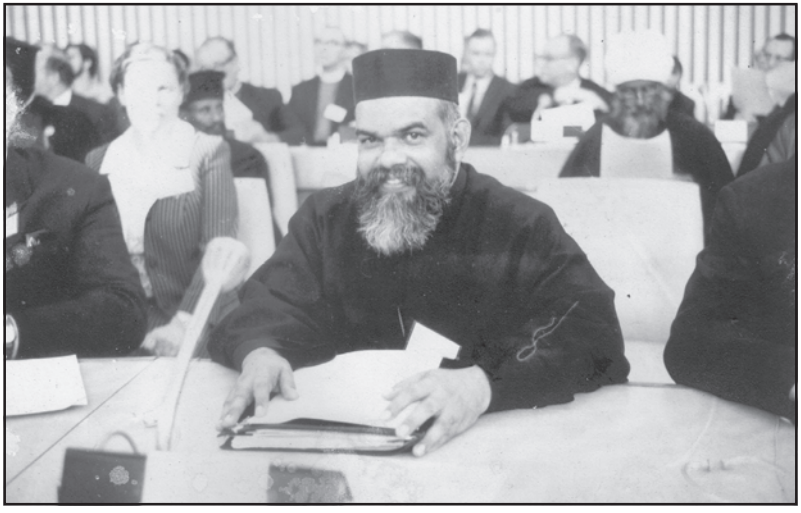
Metropolitan formulated a byelaw for the organization of priests of the Church called St Thomas Orthodox Vaidika Sangham. His Grace made guidelines for its regular functioning in Malankara, Zonal and Diocesan levels. Metropolitan gave leadership to a Zonal Conference before a few weeks of demise. His Grace was acutely sick then. His Grace provided a fresh outlook to the Alumni Association of the Seminary and gave leadership for its regular meetings.

Metropolitan took initiative to launch 'Sruthy School of Liturgical Music' with a view to systemize and raise standards of liturgical music during our worships in churches. He was nourishing such a wish in his heart for long. He was fond of music and used to play 'Gregorian chants' while on work. To realize this dream project, he identified M P George, who was a student of the Seminary in 1978.

Metropolitan noted this student singing Syriac hymns in sweet voice beautifully. HG called M P George to him, opened his hands and placed Rs 1,000/- in his hands and told him to go and learn classical music. The entire Seminary would be excited hearing this affectionate advice. Thus, along with his study in Seminary, M P George started to learn classical music also. Once he had a strong base in classical music, Metropolitan advised him to get ready for learning Western music. Metropolitan sent him to Leningrad Theological Seminary in Russia for learning liturgical music. From there he travelled to England



കോപ്റ്റിക് പാത്രിയർക്കീസ് സിറിൽ ആറാമനോടൊപ്പം ഫാ. പോൾ വർഗീസ്.



on the directives of His Grace. Dn M P George returned in 1988 and the Metropolitan was relieved that the Seminary has formulated a person to teach liturgical music. On the strength of this, the Faculty of the Seminary under the leadership of His Grace decided to open the first Liturgical Music Centre of India.[11]

During the Onam season of 1988, HH Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I Catholicose informally inaugurated Sruthy School of Liturgical Music. Later, on 1989 January 9, HH Teoctist, Romanian Patriarch formally inaugurated the School. The purpose behind this school was to raise standards of liturgical music in Orthodox parishes; however, as days progressed, the school had to step into different fields also. During the lifetime of Metropolitan, this school turned out to be a forum to provide training in music with not distinguishing between religions.

His Grace introduced a 'Kerala Study Group' as a forum to have healthy deliberations between different religions and different ideologies. Thus, Metropolitan visualized a system to make our people become abreast with global issues of varying nature.

"During 1970s, it was a regular feature to have discussions on different subjects. 'Kerala study Group' initiated opportunities to study and think about many important issues. This 'Kerala Study Group' started even before Sophia Centre. In the seminars organized by this group, many intellectuals in Kerala had participated. C Achutha Menon, K M Cherian, P Govindapillai, P T Bhaskarapanickar were some of them. This study group was a source for many innovative ideas having emerged. There was a very important seminar in 1977 about Trans-National Corporations. Since many experts were present in this seminar, people came to realize that TNC was a crucial issue for humankind. I had collected the papers presented in this seminar, edited them and published a book titled 'Burning Issues.' There used to be such important discussions and deliberations on contemporary issues there as a regular feature."

Sophia Centre was a developed form of Kerala Study group. His Grace established Sophia Center in 1976 as a centre providing opportunities to clergy and laity including women irrespective of to

which Church they belonged. The centre has been providing training and the participants have occasions to think and learn. Sophia Centre is the Conference centre of Seminary and the place where the Holy Synod of the Church meet. This is also the Central Office for Divyabodhanam Program formulated for theological education for the laity of the Church. Fr T J Joshua says about the role of the Metropolitan in setting up Sophia Centre, "The common notion we were having about theological education was training the clergy. Our activities were also in that line. However, awareness that such training or education was not spreading to the Church in its wholeness and not reaching the laity was the reason behind commencing the activities of Sophia Centre in 1974. The man behind this venture is Mar Gregorios Metropolitan with who rests the parenthood of Sophia Centre. The purpose is to provide theological training to the laity so that the whole Church gets benefit."[12]

Program for training laity was there even before Sophia Centre came up. We read in the 1972-73 annual report of Seminary about this. "Laity Conference: This Laity Conference is an initiative that started two years back (1970). This conference is in place with a view that the laity of our Church having their various activities under different circumstances and different levels could come under one umbrella to learn how to confront life in a Christian perspective and help them address their problems in a Christian way. This year, Fr Paul Varghese took classes based on the Epistle of St Paul to Romans. There were 33 people attending the conference. Present Secretary of this organization is Prof K M Tharakan. There are many communities evincing interest to organize such gatherings. With the completion of the construction of Lay Training Center, such wishes will become fruitful.

Lay Training Centre and Retreat House: Construction of a Lay Training Centre has commenced inside the compound of the Seminary. The purpose behind this is to enable the Faculty take classes for the laity and spiritual organizations as well as to conduct conferences and seminars for them without causing hindrances to normal activities of the Seminary. The financial resources for this initiative have come from member Churches of WCC.

HH Baselius Augen I Catholicose assisted by HG Dr Philipose Mar Theophilose laid the foundation stone for construction of this Center on 1970 August 6, the Feast of Transfiguration, at 4:00 pm. Many members of the Governing Board of the Seminary were present then. The wing of Seminary towards the North of the building also will start soon. Once we complete that, we would have a dining hall, dormitory for students and rooms for lodging the Faculty. In proportion to the inflow of funds from abroad, local resources should also be there."

Naming Sophia Centre so, Fr Paul Varghese had a vision, which His Grace shares, "St Mary symbolizes the whole creation. Creation is *Ochma* (revelation of Prudential Wisdom), what God had created in His image and likeness. The creation inclusive of earth, sun, moon and galaxy of stars is Prudential Wisdom. The Greek equivalent of *Ochma* is Sophia. This means Prudential Wisdom for the entire humankind."

C Achutha Menon, Sharmaji, P Govindapillai, Kumarakom Shankunni Menon and many Communist leaders utilized the sessions at Sophia Centre to understand non-Communists said. The Metropolitan organized meetings at Sophia Centre on a variety of topics such as World Peace, Disarmament and Entry of Multinational Monopolies. C Achutha Menon noted in his diary about his having participated in the seminar on disarmament on 1978 August 6, "I had been to Sophia Centre. Rajan was with me. There were discussions on Disarmament until 1:00 pm and then 2:00 to 4:00 pm. I heard the views of many who were not Communists. Mathew Kurian and K M Tharakan were there. K P Rajendran and P George also participated. In the evening, went to party office and from there, went to Thirunakkara and presided over a meeting. Mar Gregoriose too addressed this meeting. By then it started raining."

Metropolitan saw the Theological Seminary as the heart of Orthodox Church and the centre of power and wisdom. The good fortune of this establishment builds up the future glory of the Church as His Grace envisaged. We see this vision of His Grace in his notes in the Annual Report of Seminary for 1994. "Seminary is the livewire

of the Church. The clergy who come out of this Seminary after their studies and ordained to priesthood can make our Church divine in essence. For this, they should have true commitment and they should be God fearing. They should have an inclination to sacrifice. They should be rich in Divine knowledge and should be pure in character. This would enlighten our Church spiritually in the power of Holy Spirit.

We visualize the Seminary more as a Christian family that dwells in worship of God and in mutual love rather than a house of learning. The Faculty Members, students and staff are equally part of this family.

Among the full time Faculty Members, ten possesses Doctorates. Seminary is proud of this. If we look into other seminaries of Protestant and Catholic Churches, they may not have this many Indians in their Faculty with PhDs. However, the strength of our Seminary is not in this.

The Faculty Members, the students and the employees do not possess any jealousy or ill feelings; we are reconciled in Christ and jointly worship God daily. We live in love. Here, we find our strength for the last 25 years. Whenever there is any lacuna in these, we have seen reflections thereof in the life of Seminary as also in Church life."

Malankara Orthodox Church, though came into being in the first century through the Apostle St Thomas, did not have any vision or understanding of its theological stands until 20th century. Examination our history reveals that we had been welcoming foreign superiors wholeheartedly and later were struggling to come out of their clutches. Many such instances are there. There were internal issues also adversely affecting the growth and development of the Church as well as its sustenance. The foreign Churches who tried to dominate Malankara Church influenced its faith and tradition. Malankara Church did not have powerful theologians; we also did not possess deep theological thoughts. Globally, we were part of Oriental Orthodox Churches. Some of those Churches were rich in theological insights, but Malankara Church did not grow in theologically.

Fr Paul Varghese came into the scene in 1961 and the Church started realizing the intellectual and theological basics of various elements of faith it had been practicing all these years. One has to evaluate the theological contributions of Mar Gregoriose in the backdrop of the truth that there was nobody in this twenty-century-old Church to project as a Theologian in its realistic sense. His Grace introduced the study of Patristic Theology to Malankara Church. Metropolitan identified the theological foundation of the Church and made the Church to perceive it the right way. His Grace identified suitable persons, trained them to transmit these to coming generations leading them to the frontline of the Church, and encouraged them. This indeed was a catching contribution from the Metropolitan.

Dr Gabriel Mar Gregoriose was a student at the Seminary during 1966 - 70 and later, was a Member of the Faculty. He says, "In 1967, I was a second year student of the Seminary when Fr Paul Varghese took over as the Principal. I can say that the worship and life of the Church, though strongly embedded with Eastern Church traditions, the theological foundation was not comprehensible. Fr Paul Varghese introduced us to Eastern Christian Theology by synchronizing Holy Bible and Patristic traditions thereby creating awareness in us to analyze contemporary issues through a thought process and vision in life. His entry to Seminary was the birth of a new era in the history of opening the theological development of Malankara Church. Since then, for three decades, he has enlightened us orally and verbally through the depth and width of a varied world of knowledge. Whatever books or papers I have published, I do admit that the ideas therein were reflections of the rays of wisdom emanated from this great master.

I met Fr Paul Varghese for the first time in 1966. As the Associate General Secretary of WCC, he had paid a visit to the Seminary. This was my first year in Seminary. HG Dr Philipose Mar Theophilose was the Principal then. As suggested by His Grace, Fr Paul Varghese spoke at the Seminary Chapel after the prayers of Evening hour. His subject was the Position St Mary has in our Church. We pray to God; we pray to St Mary also. What difference is there? Can we say that Orthodox Church is making St Mary also God? In fact, these questions

used to bother my mind during those days. The talk of Fr Paul Varghese cleared my confusions. He said, 'God is the creator; St Mary is a creation. Position of St Mary is within the creations. Nevertheless, within the limitations of all creations, St Mary has the top position among all Saints. The reason is that she carried God, who took flesh as man, in her womb and delivered. God had chosen her for this mission, noblest among noblest. She is our mother. Among the new creation formulated in Christ, she is mother at the first place and a role model for us. She is the mother carrying Christ for the whole universe. She is a symbol of Church; she represents the Church.' Turning back, my introduction to study of Orthodox faith did commence here unconsciously without the master or disciple realizing it.

Fr Paul Varghese took over his assignment as Principal in 1967. During those days, he could spend more time at the Seminary. He taught us many topics. The topics he handled then included New Testament, Theology, Liturgy, and Holy Mysteries. Apart from taking classes, there were debates and talks. Returning from international conferences, there used to be evaluations thereof; they were occasions for familiarizing with latest thoughts and tendencies coming up in Churches and society. On one hand, there was a sincere and deep conviction that Orthodox faith is logical, Biblical and aligned with the exhortations of Church Fathers as well as purely Eastern in essence. On the other hand, there was a conscious awareness for creatively responding to upcoming philosophical and thought provoking initiatives in Church and society. The striking peculiarity of the personality of Mar Gregorios is that the above two are dovetailed in His Grace in its most balanced way.

If I recall correctly, it was in 1977, Mar Gregorios was at Kottayam Medical Centre for a week as an inpatient for some clinical check up. Some of us used to be at the Hospital turn by turn to be in service to His Grace. The days of rest at the Hospital, inspired His Grace to translate Psalms from Hebrew to Malayalam. Since the original language of Psalms was Hebrew, His Grace had his conviction that a Malayalam version should come from Hebrew and not from Syriac. His Grace would translate lying on his bed and one of us would note

them down. HG could do this exercise without referring to any dictionary. It is worth recalling that HG learned the language Hebrew as it was necessary for getting graduation in Theology. The awareness of Hebrew made it easy for mastering the language of Syriac. Such acumen in languages was helpful for Mar Gregorios to formulate thought processes based in Scriptural truths.

One can have a collection of key words from his books and talks opening doors to the mystery of Eastern thoughts alienating them from Western orientation. His Grace used these key words as pointers to basic doctrines to Eastern thoughts. The essence of Metropolitan's scholarship rests with the ability to explain the source and the inner sense behind those keywords, which His Grace received from Holy Bible and the apologies of Church Fathers; His Grace's linguistic caliber enhanced such scholarship. His Grace achieved this through disciplined hard work and strengthening the inner man.

How can we explain Holy Qurbana in relation to the sacrifice on cross? Pentecost fellowships teach that Holy Qurbana is not a sacrifice, but just a symbolic remembrance of our Lord's last supper. What do Orthodox Churches exhort on this? This question used to have answers based on an explanation borrowed from the Anglican Church. Not only on Holy Qurbana, even about other Holy Mysteries, our explanations used to be more or less in these lines. At the same time, Malankara Church retained the traditions of Eastern Churches in faith and rituals. Anglican Church teaches that Holy Qurbana is the continuation of our Lord's sacrifice on the cross and the real presence of our Lord is there in Holy Qurbana. However, Mar Gregorios pointed out that both these words, 'continuation' and 'real presence' do not reflect the true faith of the Church. His Grace taught us that Holy Qurbana is neither a repetition nor a continuation of the sacrifice on the cross. Instead, it is our Participation and Communion in the sacrifice. The term *Shauthofooso* used in Syriac liturgy for Holy Qurbana leads us to this thought.

The once for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ re-presents and re-enacts in Holy Qurbana through Holy Spirit to make it contemporary. This is not a ritual confined to the Altar of a church alone. This takes place

at the grass root level of our life practically. Our life should transform as a sacrifice filled in love. The sacrifice we offer on the Thronose in the backdrop of such a life unifies with the ultimate sacrifice of Christ and we become participants in it repeatedly. Here, the thought reflected is our participation in Holy Flesh and Holy Blood. This was there in Orthodox faith right from the beginning. But Mar Gregorios taught and cemented that this was Orthodox faith through his explanations comparing with those of others."[13]

Zachariah Mar Anthonios was a student at the Seminary during 1969-73. His Grace recalls Fr Paul Varghese, the then Principal of the Seminary. "Mar Gregorios is my Guru. While I was studying at the Seminary during 1969-73, Fr Paul Varghese was our Principal. His Grace made us understand many things during those four years. Beyond teaching, HG made us practice them. Mar Gregorios used to interact with us very affectionately. He expressed love and affection wherever he met children, took them on his lap, and cared them. We have seen some people exploiting this to their advantage. People who met HG seeking some donations used to get more than their expectations had they brought children with them. We are witnesses of these."

Fr Dr K L Mathew Vaidyan Cor Episcopa had enjoyed His Grace's affection abundantly when he was studying in the Seminary. He remembers, "Each of the classes of His Grace was valuable indicating his commitment to teaching profession. I used to write a few articles in Malayalam and English during my student days and place them on His Grace's table for corrections. In that busy schedule too, His Grace found time to correct them. Once, His Grace inaugurated a convention at Karamoodu church where I had to speak in presence of HG for an hour. On our return, Metropolitan told me, 'usually, I do not shower praises on anybody; yet, your talk was good.' On another day, I went to His Grace's room to arrange the scattered books and papers. His Grace handed over me a letter and asked me to keep it safe. This was in 1976 December and I was fourth year student. The letter was one from K P S Menon, former Indian Ambassador to Soviet Union; he wrote this after listening to a talk of Mar Gregorios. In this letter, he qualified Mar Gregorios as a man of leadership standing

shoulder to shoulder with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. I have that letter with me like a treasure even today."

Fr Jacob Philip who was a student of the Seminary has this to say, "Fr Paul Varghese was very cautious in the welfare of students of the Seminary despite his busy schedule. Whenever he returned from global conferences after exchanging deep thoughts of theological arena, students used to welcome him back very enthusiastically. They used to arrange echo meetings to hear from their good Guru his experiences and novel ideas and thoughts. When he shared with us thoughts of immense depth, the audience of his students used to wonder, thinking about him as a global encyclopedia. He could easily handle many languages proficiently. Once Cardinal Antony Padiayara addressed him saying, 'Fr Paul Varghese is a Superman.'

One day, Fr Paul Varghese was exchanging pleasantries with his students during post lunch recess. I asked him, 'Father, how is that you acquired this much knowledge and wisdom.' This was his reply, 'Daily six hours for sleep, two hours for routines and sixteen hours for reading.' The reasons for his success in life were hard work and tireless reading. Mar Gregorios was a Divine Guru and Spiritual Father who did not seek praises, but prayed for everybody including those who stood against him."

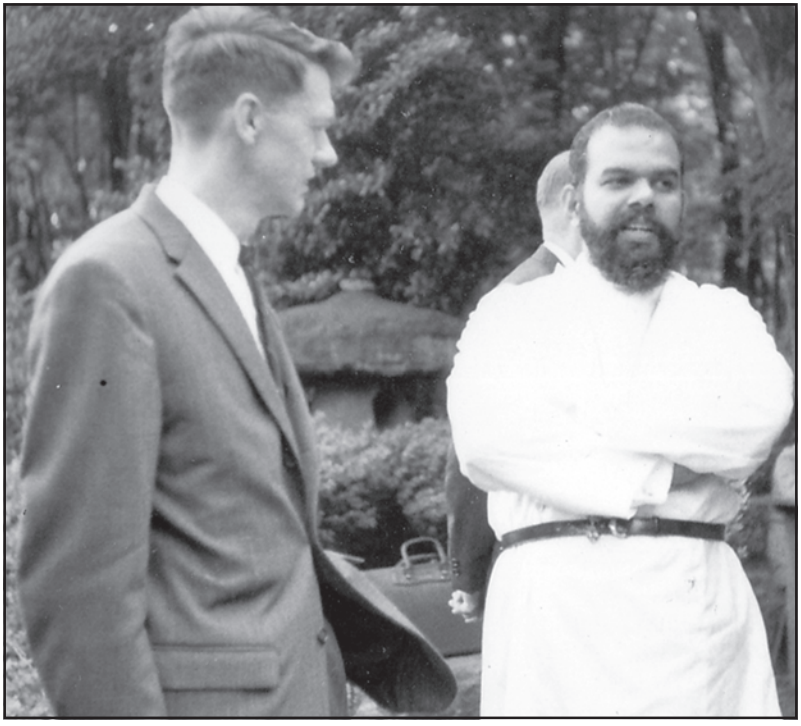
Very shortly, after Fr Paul Varghese took over the reins of the Seminary, among the students was Fr K T Philip. He recalls a special and personal care he received from Fr Paul Varghese, "I joined the Seminary in 1969. I remember him telling us the meaning of Seminary as the place where we sow seeds and nurture them to grow. If so, the farmer should have personal care on each of the sprouted seeds. That he not only preached about his seeds sprouting, but also practiced it truly in life. Even before my joining the Seminary, I have been suffering from the illness of blood not clotting. The Principal made detailed enquiries about this and sent me to Dr George Jacob of Kottayam Medical College in the company of our Warden Fr K K Mathews (later, Mathews Mar Barnabas). Even with his busy work schedule, Fr Paul Varghese used to visit me at the Hospital. Dr George Jacob informed Fr Paul Varghese that with their treatment, there

cannot be a perfect cure. Therefore, he sent me to Vellore Medical College for treatment. Fr K K Mathews came with me and did everything for me at the Hospital. Not only that Fr Paul Varghese sent me for treatment but also met all my expenses of his own."

After ordained as Metropolitan, work pressure had doubled and therefore, His Grace wished to resign as Principal of the Seminary. He raised this in the Holy Synod on many occasions, but Synod did not concur. His Grace's latest attempt in this line was in 1991. Consequently, the Faculty Members submitted a memorandum to HH Catholicose, Holy Synod and Governing Board of Seminary that Mar Gregorios continues as Principal. His Grace had to continue, as the Synod was not inclined to make a change. Later, in 1992 and 1995, Metropolitan resigned from other administrative offices, but chose to continue as Principal. His Grace gave a commitment to the Holy Synod that he would continue as Principal until they appoint a new Principal. HG also gave a request to continue with teaching assignment at the Seminary even after that.

On 1991 June 6, Seminary faculty Members Fr T J Joshua, Fr N K Koruthu Malpan, Fr Jacob Kurian, Fr K J Gabriel, Fr C C Cherian, Fr M O John, Fr M P George, Fr T I Varghese and Fr Mathew Baby signed the above memorandum and submitted it. Fr T J Joshua drafted the memorandum narrating in detail the services rendered hitherto under the initiatives of the Metropolitan for the growth and development of the Seminary. "The Faculty Members of Orthodox Theological Seminary jointly submit this memorandum before the Supreme Head of Malankara Orthodox Church HH Catholicose, the Holy Synod, and the respected Governing Board Members of the Seminary.

At the annual meeting of the Faculty Members of the Seminary on 1991 June 4 and 5, HG Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios, who has been rendering an unparalleled service as the Principal of the Seminary for the last twenty four years, hinted that HG would be leaving his assignment as the Principal very shortly, but would continue to teach at the Seminary. As Faculty Members at the Seminary, we could hear this statement with anxiety and worry. There are two reasons



for this. One, the leadership of His Grace as Principal of the Seminary is inevitable at this stage, as we perceive sincerely. Two, we do not see another person suitable to take up that position now.

HG Mar Gregorios has been taking care of the administrative matters relating to day-to-day affairs of the Seminary and passing on timey instructions as and when needed. In the absence of His Grace, Vice Principal HG Geevarghese Mar Osthathiose and Deputy Vice Principal late Fr K M Alexander had been taking care of the affairs of Seminary in the right direction. The current Vice Principal Fr T J Joshua had requested to have relief from his assignment on health grounds; however, considering the interests expressed by some of our Synod members and that he could regain his health, he is looking after the affairs systematically and efficiently.

We learn that there is a proposal to appoint an Asst Metropolitan for Delhi Diocese. If that materializes, Mar Gregorios would get more time to take care of academic and administrative matters of the Seminary. Such an eventuality was also under consideration in the last meeting of the Faculty while finalizing plans for the coming academic year for allocation of topics and such matters. As things are progressing like this, we do not envisage any cause for a change of leadership. The annual meeting of Faculty Members has appealed to the Metropolitan for reconsidering the decision to give up the assignment as Principal. We earnestly appeal before HH The Catholicos, Episcopal Synod and Seminary Governing Board Members to persuade His Grace to reconsider the above wish expressed in the Annual Faculty Meeting.

While seeing and evaluating the efficacy of Mar Gregorios, we are not relying on His Grace's interference in administration of the Seminary or involvement in its governance. Vice Principal and Faculty Members can jointly take care of those matters without any flaw. However, Mar Gregorios stands out as one among the very few at the global level to present the Theology, the Liturgy and the Spirituality of Orthodox tradition authentically and provide suitable guidelines thereof. We do not see any other person equal to him who can be the head of the Theological Seminary of Malankara Church at this stage.

His Grace has been providing us guidance and leadership based on the fundamentals that Orthodox Church has a vision of its own and the administration and working pattern of the Seminary must be oriented accordingly.

His Grace has played a crucial role in bringing up a team of efficient Faculty Members for the Seminary. His intellectual wisdom was behind formulation of Divyabodhanam Program and Sruthy School of Liturgical Music. Publications of Church Encyclopedia and Thiruvachana Bhashyam have His Grace's brain behind. Metropolitan's contributions are notable in the constructions of new building for Seminary, Sophia Centre and Staff Quarters. Thus, Mar Gregorios has successfully built up our Seminary as a Theological Center of fame.

For the further development of the Seminary and the construction of new building complex the right way, leadership of His Grace is inevitable. We see HG as a spiritual father who looks after the unity of Faculty Members encouraging the abilities and talents of each of us utilizing them for the common good.

We recall with thanks the assurance HH The Catholicos gave us during the takeover ceremony that HH would visit the Seminary once every month. Likewise, we look forward to the presence and guidance of other Metropolitans also.

We appeal most humbly before the Holy Synod that there are no changes in the present administrative systems of the Seminary and that proper decisions would be taken for Mar Gregorios to continue as the Principal of the Seminary."

His Grace was engaged in globally oriented efforts to lead the whole creation towards the fulfillment of goodness; yet, His Grace did not disappoint for anyone who sought knowledge sincerely. There were many young men at Delhi and at Kottayam keeping close relationship with the Metropolitan. Despite busy schedules, he found time to be with these youngsters. After 1980s, the time HG used to be at the Seminary kept reducing. However, whenever there was a visit to Seminary even a for short stay, HG managed to have time to

take classes for fourth year students as well as for MTh batch. His Grace was not one who relied on notes prepared at the early days of commencing a teaching vocation. For taking classes and presenting papers, HG prepared well in advance and worked out fresh notes each time.

HG once shared the reasons for taking initiatives to take classes as frequently as possible, "Many things are remaining inside my head just because I am teaching others. I can recall whatever I have in mind when I teach you. Whatever jotted down in notebooks do not come to memory easily; I have more than a hundred notebooks. The contents of these notebooks will not come down the memory line easily. Nevertheless, when I share those with others a few times, it comes to mind better. This is part of our learning process. To learn, one has to teach. Only by teaching, one can learn."

An incident Dr D Babu Paul narrates enables us to understand the commitment Metropolitan had towards students. "I could see the face of HG as a noble example of humility not so much known to the outside world. Once, during our personal talk, HG revealed to me, 'I learn when I am teaching. Today, I was preparing for a class on Hermeneutics for MTh and I got two new thoughts those had never come to my mind before.' Then I asked HG, 'Even now Your Grace prepare in advance for taking classes for MTh?' HG's reply to this question is the real symbol of humility. 'Let us what I owe my students.' This was HG Paulos Mar Gregorios."

While serving with WCC and even after that, Metropolitan had helped many others to have opportunities for higher studies with scholarships. Fr T G Zachariah was one like that who got scholarship for higher studies with the help of Fr Paul Varghese. He recalls, "I was the Secretary of HH Baselius Geevarghese II Catholicos. Once HH The Catholicose had been to heavenly abode, I had no official position at Devalokam. I had applied for higher studies in America and for scholarship. I made an enquiry about that at this time. Within few months, I received a letter from Fr Paul Varghese from Geneva. The letter was conveying me the sanction of a scholarship from WCC for three years study at St Vladimir University inclusive of travel

expenses, fees, boarding and lodging and pocket money. I joined Vladimir Seminary in 1964 September and studied there for three years to earn BD and then in another year, earned my MTh from Episcopal Seminary, Virginia."

The Metropolitan had opened the way for many people to proceed for higher studies. He wished that their capabilities were useful for Church and Society. He wanted them to expand the horizon of their knowledge and learn new things. The reminiscence of Fr T J Joshua is worth listening to, "When the Seminary Principal discussed with me the prospects of more studies and researches in New Testament, I did welcome it very happily. When I came to learn that the studies would be at Jerusalem, my joy multiplied. Thus, I reached Jerusalem for research study in 1974 September at the Jerusalem Ecumenical Institute. The name of HG Paulos Mar Gregorios was the first person whom I have to remember with thanks for encouraging me to go to Jerusalem and for having arranged scholarship for studies. My gratitude to him is inexplicable in words."[14]

The Metropolitan had encouraged many for higher studies and arranged facilities for them; this was not expecting anything in return. His only wish was that their studies should end up useful to Church and humankind. Yet, HG's efforts to bring up many in these lines did not culminate has he looked forward to. HG felt very sorry for them and shared his feelings with those who were very close to him.

* * * * * * * * *

After returning to India in 1967, the Metropolitan had his own ideologies and expectations. About such feelings and the experiences confronted in the course of time, HG shares: "When I returned to India in 1967 after nearly 20 years of wandering in four continents (Africa, America, Europe and Asia), I thought I would serve my people best by concentrating on theological education and Indian higher education. I thought that some of our better motivated and more intelligent younger people were in our colleges and universities. I was founder - chairman of the All India Association for Christian Higher Education, and worked also with D. S. Kothari and J. P. Naik of the Kothari Commission, I was full of hope - but misguided hope, as I soon found out.

From that two or three years of working in Higher Education I came to one conclusion. Adequate reform in the Indian education system, I was convinced and still am, cannot take place except as an integral part of an all round movement for social transformation in India. It is futile to inculcate higher values in schools and colleges so long as students lived in a society with much lower values and interests. Schools and colleges cannot change society's value system, until society was willing to change itself and was engaged in a nationwide popular movement (like the national freedom movement in 30's and 40's) to achieve better organisation of our political - economic structures. Formal education is not the place to start social reform or value - change.''

In 1968, Fr Paul Varghese became a member of the Central Committee of World Council of Churches representing Malankara Orthodox Church. This selection took place at the Uppsala Assembly of 1968. In the WCC Assemblies of Nairobi (1975) and Vancouver (1983) also, Metropolitan was a Central Committee Member. HG was one of the most prominent members of this 120 strong Central committee. Mar Gregorios left Central Committee in 1991 after serving for 23 long years.

During the selection process of Central Committee at the Uppsala Assembly, a large section of delegates wanted Fr Paul Varghese as its Moderator; they expressed their desire very strongly. At the same time, another section did not want Fr Paul Varghese as Moderator. However, those who were favoring him had majority in the council. The situation was such that Fr Paul Varghese would become the Moderator if there were a poll.

There were about fifty names proposed as Moderator. After informal discussions, they removed many names and the final list zeroed into two names, Fr Paul Varghese and Dr M M Thomas.

The positives many saw in Fr Paul Varghese included scholarship, ability to implement programs, willingness to listen carefully and evaluate issues and so on. He had close alignment with delegates from Asian and African countries. All delegates had been acquainted with him. Under such circumstances, the general feeling prevailed

was that Fr Paul Varghese would certainly be the next Moderator; even Dr M M Thomas believed so. The delegates from Asian and African countries stood behind Fr Paul Varghese strongly. However, delegates from Western Protestant countries were perturbed. They feared their domination in WCC would end had Fr Paul Varghese become the new Moderator, particularly because he was a strong leader from Afro - Asian community, that too from an Orthodox Church. Therefore, they worked out strategies to avoid Fr Paul Varghese becoming the Moderator.

The General Secretary of WCC Dr Eugene Carson Blake summoned Fr Paul Varghese one day while the Assembly was in session. He sought assistance from Fr Paul Varghese in an issue. "Can you proceed to the African summit immediately? A delegation is going there to submit some suggestions as a memorandum; can you lead this delegation?" Fr Varghese consented, but told him openly, "My journey shall be after our Assembly. It would look inappropriate for me to attend another function when our Assembly is in session."

This journey to the African summit was a plan of his adversaries to ensure the absence of Fr Paul Varghese from the Assembly for some time. A civil war was going on in Biafra of Nigeria. In relation to this civil war, a nine-member commission met at a place called Niche. Haile Selassie was the leader of this summit. The attempt of his adversaries in WCC was to send Fr Varghese away for the sake of this summit pointing out that he was very close with Haile Selassie. Nevertheless, it did not strike him then, that this move was to avoid him for some time from the Assembly. His thinking was as simple as this; it would not be proper for him to leave the Assembly at this juncture because of the 'politics' that was ruling the session those days.

Again the General Secretary called Fr Paul Varghese the next day. Dr Blake told him, "You are the only one person who can help WCC now." Fr Varghese took this as a big joke. The request from a General Secretary like this had to be joke, nothing else. He replied in a lighter tone, "I am prepared to serve anyone in this world; therefore, you tell me, I will do it." Dr Blake reminded him, "This is not a joke;

the issue is serious." Fr Varghese queried, "What is the issue so serious?"

The General Secretary said, "We have to select one as the Chairman of the next Central Committee. About this, there were deliberations at various levels and we got fifty names; then after further discussions, the list narrowed down to two. You are one among the two. Once you are the Moderator, there is a threat that the entire delegates from one country would boycott the Council." Fr Paul Varghese replied, "This issue is really serious. I am prepared to do anything you desire. Tell me what I should do." He also asked Dr Blake who the other candidate was. He said, the candidate was Dr M M Thomas. Fr Varghese said, "He is a very noble person. More than me, it is Dr Thomas suitable for this position. I can certainly withdraw for his sake."

Fr Paul Varghese understood that there were some plots behind this. Yet, he was not prepared to context. Particularly, he had no inclination to context against Dr M M Thomas. Fr Varghese enquired with Dr Blake, "If my name comes up again in the nominating committee, how would you handle it?"He replied that he had a solution for that. "I am going to appoint you to the nominating committee with a stipulation that no member of this committee can context as Moderator." Fr Paul Varghese agreed that he would co operate with the idea of Dr Blake.

The Central Committee met to elect Nominating Committee. The election processes for the new Presidents and Moderator were not over. Therefore, General Secretary himself presided over the Central Committee. Fr Paul Varghese raised a point whether it was just for the General Secretary to preside over Central Committee. He asked, 'would it not be better for one of the former Presidents or someone else to preside?" However, Dr Blake replied, "No, it is better I preside." Fr Varghese pointed out, "That is not constitutional. You would be in trouble if someone presses for voting." Dr Blake insisted, "No, No… I will handle it. I know how to handle."

After a brief introductory talk, Dr Blake said, "The purpose this meeting of the Committee is just one thing, to select the nominating

committee. What I have with me is a list for nominating committee members worked out, meticulously. Representation from all areas is here. Shuffling these names, this way and that way, can cause confusions. Therefore, we expect you will accept this list as it is. Do you need another President for this? Is it fine that I preside?"

There was no response from the members. Saying, "I accept your silence as concurrence" Dr Blake presided over. Soon, he read out the names of Nominating Committee members. Suddenly, one member from an African country got up and said, "Fr Paul Varghese need not be a member of this committee. We desire to have him as the Central Committee Moderator." A Member from an Asian country stood up and said, "Fr Paul Varghese is one, we look forward to become the Moderator. Therefore, his name has to be deleted from Nominating Committee."

This put Dr Blake into a tight corner. His calculations went astray. When a member wanted the name of Fr Paul Varghese deleted from the list of Nominating Committee, Dr Blake could not overrule that. Only Fr Varghese alone could say that. Dr Blake looked at Fr Varghese pathetically.

Slowly, Fr Paul Varghese stood up; all faces turned to him. He said, "I am extremely grateful to my Asian and African colleagues for the faith they expressed in me. However, for the good future and unity of WCC, I am accepting my membership in the Nominating Committee. I also clarify my position that I shall not be a candidate for the post of Central Committee Moderator." At this statement, those who suggested his name had nothing to say further. When Fr Paul Varghese said that he was 'accepting', it was not possible to oppose it. Dr Blake ended the meeting on a satisfactory note.

The German delegates were those who threatened to walk out from the Council if Fr Paul Varghese was the Moderator. Many German Churches were causing unnecessary issues during those days because of their financial richness. Fr Varghese used to oppose such stands. Therefore, they saw him as their common enemy and moved against him.

When the meeting of Nominating Committee was in session, the Germans who stood against Fr Varghese said, "Our wish was that you become the Moderator." Since he had understood that they were the ones who plotted against him, Fr Varghese told them, "There is no need to tell me all those. I know the truth. I avoided being the Moderator on my own. The question of my nomination does not arise at all."

At the selection of moderator, Fr Paul Varghese proposed the name of Dr M M Thomas. Nobody objected to this proposal and was acceptable to all. Thus, since some Churches did not favor Fr Paul Varghese becoming the Moderator, the session elected Dr M M Thomas who was acceptable to them also.

Dr M M Thomas recalls the circumstances how he became the Moderator, "Fr Paul Varghese was the strong representative of Orthodox Churches. His was the prominent name that was in the air as the new Moderator. The name of Russell Chandran was also there. Both these were Theologians and Indians. Truly speaking, the consensus that prevailed favored Fr Paul Varghese and all of us thought that he would be the new Moderator. I was not at all aware that my name was also there under consideration in the committee. In fact, there was no reason that my name could come for this. Visser't Hooft had come to me and sought my concurrence. Without my concurrence, they could not take decision to choose me. Everybody in the Council of Churches knew Fr Paul Varghese. He was a known Bible Study leader of the Council. He had a notable ability to explain things to politicians and scientists stressing issues relevant to them and important in their dealings. Because of all these, everybody expected Fr Paul Varghese to become the Moderator, particularly Indians. He was not worried to have enemies for him. There would have been objections raised against him. As he was very strong in WCC, there was a group against him. I think, Dr Blake did not support him. Visser't Hooft supported me. There was a chance that Fr Paul Varghese might withdraw for my sake. When he came to learn that I too was in the fray, he would have said that he would not be there. Since he was very strong, I think he would have considered me as a timid one."

With this incident, Fr Paul Varghese came to know about the methodology adopted at the Assembly and Central Committee in taking various decisions; every decision has some personal interest behind it. Yet, Fr Paul Varghese extended his full co-operation to the WCC. He took efforts to involve WCC to an optimum level to use its infrastructure for the benefit of justice and peace globally and for the liberation of the exploited. He also attempted to re orient the thoughts and approach of WCC so as to co ordinate its activities for the goodness of humankind.

After the Uppsala assembly, Fr Paul Varghese went to Biafra in Nigeria to express the concern of WCC before the African summit and to submit the memorandum. He led the WCC delegation. By the time the delegation reached Biafra, the summit had ended. Fr Paul Varghese and the delegation met Haile Selassie and returned. They could not do anything worthwhile. They could just submit the memorandum.

During 1968 - 1975, Fr Paul Varghese served as a member of the WCC Central Committee. He was a member of other committees such as Dialogue, Faith and Order, Church and Society and Development. It was common perception that he was suitable and capable to be a member in all these committees. However, there were people who could not digest Fr Paul Varghese being a member of so many committees. In 1972, a law was enacted that one person can have membership only in one committee. Fr Paul Varghese was the only one who was member in more than two committees.

Therefore, Fr Paul Varghese quit as member of these committees except from the committee for Church and Society. He wished to continue in this committee because of his interest in Science, Technology and such topics. In 1975, Mar Gregorios became the Moderator of this Department.

It is worth reading his diary notes of 1970 August 9, the 48th birthday of Fr Paul Varghese. The thoughts he carried in his mind comes out to a good extent in these:

“Blessed be the name of the Lord our God! He has brought me to

this day - 48 years of age.

I am supposed to be a mature adult. And yet I know how pitifully inmature I am, how woefully concerned about myself, about my health, about my future careeer and so on.

True maturity demands that one is free from excessive concern over oneself. I have lived a life in which there has been little sharing, and I have become selfish and ego - centred to the point of lovedom for others.

Here I have been at the Seminary for three years, and I am ashamed to think of how little I have really achieved. The Seminary is still not on a secure or stable foundation. Our financial situation is always precarious. We still have to build up a competent faculty. We have not constructed our adequate curriculam. We ought to produce dozens of books here - all these and many other works remain unfulfilled, quite perribly due to my own laziness.

The accident this past year has reduced the amount of my physical energy by half. I continue to make half a dozen trips abroad and that takes up all my time and energy. And I am not sure it is the wisest way of budgetting my time.

The spiritual wilderness seams in much more serious a problem. It must be that one's emotions dry up at a certain age. In any case neither my emotions nor my will can experience much worship. Rich emotional experiences of the presence of God are perhaps no longer to be expected at my age. First the paralysis of the will seems to one a problem, with which I should deal. My prayer discipline has become extremely weak. Equally weak in my control over my thoughts and derives. There is a basic weakness of the will that render me unfit to be a fruitful calowrer in the Vineyard of the Lord.

O God, have mercy upon me. In Thee alone I trust. There is neither power nor wisdom in me. Only in Thy love can I find both power and wisdom. Make me free, endow me with power from on Light, that thy servant may truly serve thy kingdom."

Fr Paul Varghese was a member of the Nomination Committee to find out a new General Secretary of WCC in 1971. Even a few

names of Nomination Committee members also came up for consideration as General Secretary. Name of Fr Paul Varghese was also there. As a strong representative of Orthodox Churches, Orthodox Church delegates and Afro Asian Church delegates wished Fr Paul Varghese to come to this position. Nevertheless, this was tough as Protestant delegates had majority in the Council. Dr M M Thomas had written about his discussions with Philip Potter who was looking forward to take over as the General Secretary with the support from Protestant Churches, "But I did say that after Canterbury the Orthodox had put forward the name of Fr Paul Varghese as a possible successor to Blake."[15]

There were 13 members in the Nomination Committee. The number of names came up for initial discussions were 33. Among these, 26 names were not worth under various reasons. The remaining seven names included Fr Paul Varghese, Dr M M Thomas, Emilio Castro and Philip Potter. Dr Thomas was not a Nomination Committee member. At the last stage voting, Fr Paul Varghese and Dr M M Thomas secured six votes each. Philip Potter with twelve votes was ahead of all. Philip Potter succeeded Eugene Carson Blake and became General Secretary later.

Fr Paul Varghese wished to liberate WCC at least to some extent from the Protestant traditions of concentrating exclusively on Bible reading and exhortations without giving any importance to Prayers and Worship. He showed the courage to raise this issue in the Central committee knowing well that the majority there would not cherish this. Once, the Vice Chairman of the Central Committee took his suggestion seriously. We can read about this crucial incident of the 1974 Central Committee in the publication of WCC namely 'Ecumenical Review' (October 1974, pp. 684 - 685):

"Fr. T. Paul Varghese in his paper "Reflections on Bucharest" looked at the theological aspects of the conference. He believed that for the future we will need to develop a theology that holds three elements together. Firstly; the quest for freedom and justice, secondly, the struggle for a new and richly varied civilization that ensures a better quality of life and, thirdly, the desperate need of alien-

ated human beings to find personal meaning and fulfilment in a community that sustains proper relationships to a transcendent and imminent God.

'In this kind of theology', said Fr. Varghese, 'the relationship between humanity and the rest of creation will have to be carefully delineated. The rest of creation has to be mastered in the sense that we have to be masters of our own bodies. The rest of creation should not be alienated from us, but must become part of us, as our bodies are part of us.'

The result of this thinking would be, according to Fr. Varghese, to see our dependence on God as the source of all existence. This requires cultivation of not only our poetic, artistic, literary and imaging capacities, but also a genuine capacity for community worship using all our faculties.

It was on this note of community worship that the committee ended its meeting when the vice-chairman of the central committee, Miss. Pauline Webb, prayed: 'The burden of our sins and the sins of the world has become intolerable but the vision must not be lost that "God is over all."

During 1960-70, there were changes in Fr Paul Varghese in relation to his mental faculty and his thoughts. This seems to have happened in seven areas. See his article in 'Christian Century':

"CHANGE of the mind, like growth of the body, is generally imperceptible. As the body sloughs off cells and forms new ones, so the mind quietly casts aside thoughts and ideas and replaces them by others, only occasionally - at pubescence and middle age, for instance are there more dramatic changes.

Theologically, I seem during this past decade to have passed through pubescence and come into a cantankerous and boisterous adolescence. Not that I like too much to talk theology. My deliverance from childhood - that is, from Western tutelage - has taught me above all the wisdom of silence. That way, one's contribution to the cacophony of nonsense is at least drastically reduced.

I

A father-figure comes in handy for the adolescent's discovery of self-identity especially if the figure is dominant and powerful enough to make one's revolt look all the more heroic. For me, Augustine of Hippo was such a figure. What a release it was to learn, in 1959-60, that he was the spring and fount of all creative Western theology, and then to make the gratifying discovery that this source was poisoned! I had already discovered that, as an Eastern Christian, I did not even need to call Augustine a saint. His name appears neither on our liturgical calendar nor in our manuals of theology. The Eastern tradition had wisely ignored him and felt none the poorer for it. What if my supervisor at Oxford insisted that only Western thinkers like Augustine could think problems through? It was this well- known professor's incapacity to understand Eastern thought, together with his adoption of Augustinianism as a standard by which to measure the doctrines of others, that prompted my revolt (I refer to J. N. D. Kelly, whose Early Christian Doctrines summarizes his theological views).

Quite seriously, I believe today that Western theology cannot reorient itself until it takes a second look at some of Augustine's basic ideas. This is not the place to enter into a full criticism. Let me merely indicate five areas where re-examination could reveal basic flaws in Augustine's thought.

First, Augustine's low view of matter leads him to a low view of the incarnation of our Lord. Taking his cue from the early Athanasius, the bishop thought of the incarnate body primarily as a come-on drawing us to contemplation of loftier spiritual realities. The material body of our Lord was but an instrument of revelation.

Second, and probably because of the same vestigial Manicheanism which undervalued matter, Augustine had a low view of this world. The polarity in his thinking between the civitas mundi and the civitas Dei can only be termed alarming. Western theology is still learning to correct this basic error which has had so many consequences.

Third, because his view of the human element in the incarnation is so low, he holds a low view of man. By taking sin as almost constitutive of human nature, Augustine led the Western church astray--

toward denial of the freedom and dignity of all men, Christian or non-Christian. He makes man so utterly dependent and slavish in relation to God that God is distorted in to an arbitrary dictator like the Caesars-- a petty God whose glory has to be vindicated at the expense of the glory of man. But only a God who can be glorified in the glory of man is worth worshiping.

Fourth, Augustine's Soteriology went wrong because of his preoccupation with individual and personal sin, original and actual. Salvation is more than deliverance from sin. It is making man like God, bringing him in to the fullness of humanity. We today are caught in a negative and individual view of salvation.

Fifth, by his failure to understand the sacramental principle as integral to the human condition and to the incarnation (man is a citizen of two worlds), Augustine contributed to a substantial distortion of the sacraments as accommodations of spiritual realities to suit the grossness of man. His misconception of the ordained ministry is also a result of his misunderstanding of the true relation of word to sacrament.

These five points (I state them in shorthand) are crucial for the understanding of what Christianity is all about, and my change of mind in the past ten years can be said to focus on them. Any dialogue between East and West must begin on these points, and we may find that, Christianity being after all an Eastern religion, the ancient Eastern approach Augustine deviated from still has much to say to us.

"Augustine will survive your criticism," another all-knowing professor told me some time ago, without making any attempt to understand what I was saying. Augustine probably will survive, for he deserves to. He was a great genius, a spiritual and intellectual giant. My purpose is not to destroy his reputation but to seek the renewal of theology in a truly ecumenical context, rather than in the shallow atmosphere and narrow confines of a secular urban-technological civilization in an Augustinian frame work. It is the survival of the Western interpretation of the Christian faith that I have grave doubts about.

My reaction against Augustinianism did not lead me to a superficial liberal theology (as it did to many in the West in the earlier decades of our century). I now subscribe to a sacramental and ecclesiological humanism.

II

A second major change in my mind has been a growing skepticism about the power of words. The printing press seems to have destroyed the power of the spoken word long ago.

The theologian sometimes thinks that the problem of the church today is the lack of the right words-- in short, of a relevant theology. But the world is not waiting for new words; it is waiting for Godot – a pattern of life, a type of personality, a way of living, being, doing, thinking. It is our professional bias that makes us think a new theology will solve our problems. Only God is going to solve our problems. Perhaps, however, a new pattern of living the Christian life may open the way.

This faulty reliance on words and forms of words is found not only in the West. Here in India, too many people talk and talk about an indigenous theology as the cure-all, but never produce one. For a fresh theology has to come out of a new way of living the Christian life in Indian conditions. Such a new way of life is both the matrix and the authentication of a new theology anywhere. Young people especially are looking for a person or a type that is authentic, not for new words.

What a misunderstanding it is to think that communication takes place mainly by words! Voice and ear and even the conscious mind form but a part of the communication system between human beings. Psychologists have been long at work on the role of kinesic and paralinguistic information in communication. Our actions, our gestures, the very lines on our face, all communicate.

Thus I have come to believe that being and doing are more important than speaking in communication. And anyone can see how that belief in itself devalues theology considerably.

III

A third area in which my mind has changed in the past ten years is in regard to the dialectic between structural relations and personal relations. I had never quite seen how the larger framework of society substantially affected personality. But by observing the faces of people of various nationalities and religious groups, I began to see that structural values and national ethos can change a person's face and also that a facial change is always the result of change in personality. This conclusion was reinforced as I watched those of my own countrymen who had spent five or six years studying abroad. I discovered that each country sojourned in produced a different type of personality. Even the particular institution attended made a difference.

But more important for me was the middle level -- that between large structural relationships, as in the nation, and intimate personal relationship, as in the family. The small group, in which intimacy and a degree of independence are combined and structural relations are consciously accepted, seems to me the milieu in which the new humanity can be most effectively shaped, both as a social structure and as individual persons. Such a group must be a school for its members, a place where work, worship, study, play, property relations, recreation and repose are all suitably balanced in order to shape a new type of personality which will work actively for the transformation of society. More than any new theology, we need many such pioneering, committed, socially alert groups.

IV

A fourth area in which my mind has changed is closely related to the third. I have come to a new – or rather, a very old - understanding of freedom. Freedom in the positive sense means creativity that is spontaneous, not caused by external pressures; it is the capacity to conceive the good in new forms and then to create that good. To be free also means not to be directed by one's passions and ambitions or deterred from action by false inhibitions and complexes. Freedom is something given to man so that, while being part of creation, he can himself become a creator and alter the shape, the direction and the

meaning of creation.

The fresh insight for me lay in understanding freedom in a structural context. Not that I had chosen sides in the argument between Claude Levi-Strauss and Jean-Paul Sartre, between structuralism and existentialism. On the contrary, I saw that individual freedom is inseparable from the freedom of the collective (the community) to choose its own goals as a society and to work to achieve them. Ultimately it is humanity that must be free. The measure of freedom that a Gandhi, a Sartre, or a Jean Genet goes wrong simply because they have insisted on their individual freedom without in the same act choosing also the freedom of mankind. The individual quest for freedom takes place in alienated framework. It can bring only misery so long as my intention is to establish my identity over against the masses. No matter if I become one of the masses provided that thereby the masses would become free; for in their freedom -- i.e., in their capacity to conceive, choose and attain the good -- I shall find my own fulfillment. My fairly total abandonment of the two extremes of existentialist and structuralist philosophy and theology may be understood in this context.

V

A fifth area of significant change is in my understanding of mission and missions. For a long time I had suspected that modern Catholic and Protestant missions were expressions of the cultural and economic aggressiveness of the West -- though probably a certain aggressiveness has always characterized Christian mission. However, during the past ten years I have had occasion to watch the show from inside, and my negative reaction to the mission of the Western church has developed to a high pitch. The basic mistake of Western mission is not so much cultural aggression as missionary colonialism. Never before in church history has mission been as completely institutionalized as in the years since 1500 which saw the expansion of the West. In the previous centuries when a missionary went to another country to evangelize he preached the gospel, established the church and probably died there. There was no need for a second generation of missionaries, though occasionally a teacher or a bishop

might visit the mission field.

But this idea that missionaries must go in every generation, that they should be organized, their finances looked after, life and medical insurance provided, cars, bungalows and compounds furnished – all that seems to me to kill mission. Today it is economic imperialism or neocolonialism that is the pattern in missions. Relief agencies and mission boards control the younger churches through the purse-strings. Foreign finances, ideas and personnel still dominate the younger churches and stifle their spontaneous growth.

My disgust with this pattern has made me suspect even the ecumenical movement. Catholic and Protestant seem to be collaborators in this neocolonialist domination and Western cultural imperialism in the ecclesiastical sphere. So now I say, "The mission of the church is the greatest enemy of the gospel." I began to say it 15 years ago, rather softly. Very rarely did I find any creative response. Therefore I have decided to be rude and rough about this matter. I still do not have much hope that the Western churches (or even the dependent non-Western churches) will see the point, because to see it is to be pushed to most drastic changes in church life both in the West and in the rest.

VI

A sixth area in which my mind has changed in the past ten years is that of the relation between sacrament and society. Today I can accept only a sacramental-ecclesiological social ethics. The stuff that comes out of ecumenical conferences claiming to be Christian social ethics bores me no end. I can understand human society only on the analogy of the church. My notions of social justice come from my understanding of the communion of saints. And I can understand the ministry of the church in the world only in terms of a fresh understanding of the sacramental principle and the sacramental ministry. But how can I even indicate here the scope of my book-length thoughts in these areas?

VII

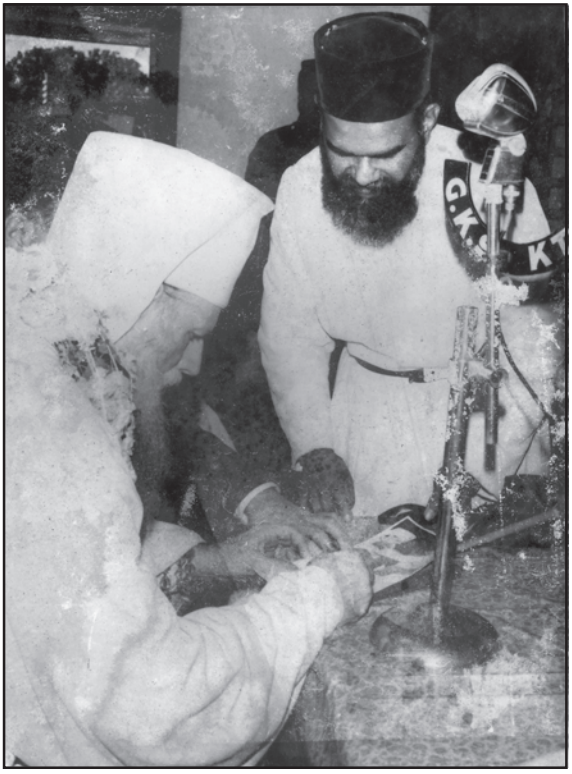
Finally, my mind has changed in relation to the nature and destiny

of man. I now firmly believe that the destiny of man is to be like God. God is the source of his own being, but man's being will always be derived from God. Yet in love, wisdom and power, as well as in holiness -- which is after all something more than the combination of these three -- man must become like God. That alone gives me a new perspective for understanding the human vocation on earth and beyond-- again, a book-length idea.

Without being pedantic and academic, one could say that what God has done in Christ has consequences for all men. To use Roman Catholic terminology, all men, Christians and non-Christians, are in the realm of "supernatural grace" stemming from the incarnation. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ make a difference for the history of the world and the destiny of mankind. All the secular ideas and forces smacking of salvation that are in vogue today come from the Christ event and the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Man's attempt to build a tower of Babel was reprimanded and frustrated by God. Today, God allows man to build many towers of Babel -- to go to the extremes of hubris and blasphemy, to defy the divine and erect a secular city. That is, man always goes to the edge of catastrophe -- "brinkism" is his delight. Yet God has lengthened man's rope, so that even in the misuse of freedom he can travel far. Will God finally let go? He well may. Catastrophe is quite conceivable, and even the resurrection of Christ (pace Moltmann and Pannenberg) does not provide insurance against it. For the same Lord predicated both his own resurrection and the apocalyptic denouement of creation. Nor does the fact of hope (a Ia Bloch) provide a sufficient basis for the notion that things will work out for mankind in history.

In other words, there is no basis for the liberal hope of building the urban technological paradise. There was a time when I thought that the movement toward the Kingdom of God and the movement toward the urban technological society would merge somewhere. I now have second thoughts. Certainly neither the affluent society with its pressure for consumption and the resultant bloated egos, nor the regimented society with its repression of so much that is creative in



man, shows us the way to paradise. Alienation and nuclear destruction are twin giants threatening mankind.

These days I think of disarmament and reconciliation as the proximate goals which would lead us in the direction of the Kingdom. Science and technology now have their own momentum and can go on without assistance from the church.

Disarmament and reconciliation are integrally related in my mind. Alienation should be tackled at all its four levels: the chasm that separates urban-technical man from God should be bridged; man must regain control of the structures-- economic, social and political -- that now hold him prisoner; nations, groups and individuals must learn again to trust and have compassion for each other; man must find himself, not in a whirl of activity but in the depths of silence. These four elements together I call "disalienation".

A concrete place to begin is the third area--the disalienation of nations and groups. Here disarmament is to be seen as a positive program. Centralized and widely controlled power should eliminate group conflicts, and resources now wasted in building up arms reserves should be diverted to science, education, the elimination of poverty and the enhancement of human creativity. Only in trying to build a united and unified humanity can we rediscover the way to God as well as our own being. Regaining control of economic, social and political structures is a key task for which we need more than revolutionary techniques and global strategies. Only a corps of men and women, distributed all over the world, ready to labor and die for the cause, can pioneer the movement for disalienation. And the spiritual dynamism for such a pioneering movement (such as the communist movement once was) can come today only out of a more profound understanding of Semitic Christianity.

I have made no attempt here to be systematic, thorough or detailed. The mind keeps changing, and changing still" ("A Sacramental Humanism. How My Mind has Changed", *The Christian Century*, Sept. 23, 1970, pp. 1116-1120).

Taking a rebellious attitude towards the cultural highhandedness and intellectual narrowness of Western Christianity, Mar Gregorios

after returning from Princeton in 1954 took efforts to study other religions deeply for the next forty years. He took part in dialogues between Christians and Hindus. One such dialogue at the Sattar Ashram of Stanley Johns was note worthy. Normally, the papers presented had veils of courtesy; they had a mask of universal love and goodwill to highlight that each religion is better that others. However, the tea breaks were occasions of one to one clashes of ideas. Metropolitan clearly recalls two occasions.

One was a direct question from a University Professor who was a Hindu. He openly asked, ‘‘You seem to have some measure of honesty about you. Can I ask you the question: why do you Christians want to have dialogue with Hindus? You have largely failed in your fire and thunder evangelism to convert us Hindus. Is not dialogue your new technique to get our ear, so that you can try to convert us in a devious way?” Metropolitan believes that the literature on dialogue published by Protestants and Roman Catholics under the guise of dialogues are confirming the anxiety this Hindu friend has expressed, which is the unfortunate part of it.

That day, Fr Paul Varghese took a decision. He would accept two principles in dialogues with other religious believers. One, there would be transparency to the maximum. Christians should not have hidden agenda while engaging in dialogues. All humankind deserves love of Christ. Sacrifice of Christ was for everyone. The first and foremost catalyst that carries the dialogues should be Christian love for humankind in its entirety. There can be other catalysts too such as the anxiety about the oneness of humankind, the need to maintain communities, even if a multitude, living in friendliness everywhere and the like. Nevertheless, there shall not be any agenda to change the religion of another.

Two, there shall never be any claim that one religion is nobler than the other is; during a dialogue, all religions stand at the same level. Listen to others with respect and try to learn from them. You may have a feeling that your faith alone is true. However, you have no right to claim any greatness. Everyone depends on Divine grace and Divine mercy whether one is a Christian, a Hindu or a Muslim. Some

respect and recognize Divine grace and mercy; some others may not be so.

A Hindu friend revealed the concept he had about the love of Jesus Christ for humankind during the snacks time one day: 'You seem to be tough enough to take this,' Fr Paul Varghese adjusted himself to listen sharply on hearing the introduction. "I want to tell you what images go through my Hindu mind, when you Christians talk to us about your "Christian love" for Hindus. I visualize a giant spider, oozing out from the pores of its skin quantities of gooey fluid, called Christian love, and skilfully weaving a glorious web in which it wants to catch me, an unsuspecting Hindu fly." Fr. Paul Varghese was shocked. But he didn't show up. He knows that the friend's allegation is not baseless. The Christian love, which came out in the form of charity or of useful social institutions such as hospitals, schools and orphanages, was still governed by the motives of 'witnessing to Christ' and of making Christianity attractive. It may be unfair to regard all Christian social work as an advertisement for the gospel, but non-Christians do see it that way much too frequently.

WCC opened a sub unit for initiating dialogues with other religions. Dr Stanley Jedidiah Samartha, a top class Indian Christian took over as its President. His contributions to this venture were appreciable. This sub unit succeeded in organizing a few inter religious dialogues in European Churches also who were normally keeping a narrow-minded attitude culturally. Fr Paul Varghese had played a good leadership role in these. They coordinated some rules and regulations so that such dialogues were just and truthful. They could make good inroads even to the extent of the experience of praying meaningfully with other religious believers. Nevertheless, these caused some confrontations in the European Christian circles. For the simple reason of joining a prayer-service with some Muslims, a German Professor who was a friend of Fr Paul Varghese almost lost his job. Yet, the sub unit moved on with their task without creating unnecessary noise. Their activities went on until the 1975 Nairobi Assembly of WCC.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer made a claim that Christianity, particularly European Christianity had attained maturity; Fr Paul Varghese and

others in the Dialogue Working Group thought that it was time to test the claim of Bonhoeffer. They invited a few from different religions across the world as observers to the Nairobi Assembly. A session of the Assembly was earmarked for inter religious dialogues. The subject that had priority at Nairobi was Environmental problems; along with this, Cultural Plurality and Inter Religious Dialogues those were at the back page of the Assembly Agenda had to be brought to the centre as they desired. Fr Paul Varghese had the opportunity to preside over session of the dialogue.

"In response to my presidential remarks, a friend of mine, a Norwegian Lutheran bishop, asked me, 'in what sense does the Chairman find the revelation in Jesus Christ so insufficient that he has to go the non-Christians to learn the truth? "I was offended, but being in the chair, could not retort in my usual rude manner. so I responded, 'In this sense that the Chairman is not as fortunate as his friend the bishop from Norway, who seems to have so mastered the revelation in Jesus Christ, that he is so totally self-satisfied and does not feel any need to learn from others.' I doubt that the barb got through. But my non-Christian friends saw for themselves the shameful narrow mindedness of European Christianity. They were hurt. But kept their cool and continued to be polite."

"The Assembly decided that the WCC was not to engage in any more multi-religious dialogue, but to stick with bilateral dialogues in which Christians kept the control. The Nairobi Assembly disillusioned me, and I came to the conclusion that neither forms of Western Christianity, Roman Catholic or Protestant, were mature enough to engage in dialogue Christians could not control and manipulate. I am not claiming that Eastern Orthodox Christianity is more mature or more open in this regard. In fact it is only in contrast with the dry scholasticism and exclusivistic dogmaticism of Eastern Orthodoxy that we can see Western Christianity in a better light."

"Anyway, the process was begun by which I lost confidence in the leadership of the Western Church - Protestant, Roman Catholic or Sectarian. And my own Eastern Orthodoxy was lost on the margins of humanity, quixotically and uncomprehendingly struggling against many hostile forces on all sides - Islam in the Middle East, aggressive

Roman Catholic, Protestant and Sectarian proselytizing missions everywhere, atheist communism in Eastern and Central Europe, and liberal secularism reaching out globally with its bloodsucking tentacles. Eastern Orthodoxy developed a barricade psychology of self-defence by sheer negativity, smug in its pettiness, making tall claims about its monopoly on Christian truth, and yet unable to communicate with either the modern world or even with its own youth and laity (including the alienated Orthodox women)."

The Malankara Syrian Christian Association was to meet again in 1974 to choose Episcopas. The believers in Northern dioceses of Kerala came forward suggesting the name of Fr Paul Varghese. They had suggested his name at the session of Association held in 1965 also.

About the candidature of Fr Paul Varghese, there were some disputes within the Managing Committee. One issue was whether there is any need to select a person again when his name was already there in the previous Association. These discussions took place in a Managing Committee Meeting where Fr Paul Varghese was also present. This caused personal disturbances to him. He desired that Holy Synod and the members of the Church should not have any misunderstandings about his stand on this issue. Therefore, he decided to submit his points of view on this matter to the Holy Synod as a Memorandum. However, he did not submit the memorandum to Holy Synod respecting the views and opinions of many people who knew him well. The memorandum Fr Varghese prepared was like this:

"A memorandum before the Holy Synod submitted most humbly by Fr Paul Varghese.

Holy Synod and the Managing Committee has decided to select five candidates when the Malankara association meets in the coming October to be ordained to the Episcopate of the Church.

There was some expert opinion that including my name in such a prospective list had some technical and procedural objections and that some of our Metropolitans had taken a stand that there were no such hindrances in our system as proclaimed in the managing Committee where I too was present.

E. MOHAMED ALI

Regarding these issues, I do desire earnestly that there should not be any misunderstandings about my stand in the Holy Synod or among the members of our Church.

As an unofficial spokesperson of the Association members from the Diocese of Cochin, Dr Chacko George wrote a letter to me on 1965 October 28 when I was at Geneva. The content of his letter was that the Association would meet on 1965 December 28 when five candidates would be chosen for the Episcopate and that I too should be one among the chosen ones as wished by many people. "kindly let me know as early as possible whether we shall be right to include your name in our list of recommended nominees."

When I replied to this letter on 1965 November 4, I had mentioned that I was in receipt of a few such letters and their request to me was that I should not object to their wishes. "I am grateful to all of your for your confidence in me, and pray God that I may someday be worthy of it. For the present, my earnest and most humble request to all of my friends and well - wishers in that you will make it clearly known in the managing committee and in the Association that *I am totally unprepared and unwilling to let my name go up*. If it goes up, and by some remote chance I am elected, you will place me in the embrrassing position of having to refuse to accept the call of the Church."

At the same time, HH Catholicose written a letter in favor of me on 1965 October 22 to Geneva as shown below:

> Blessings to dear Fr Paul Varghese,
>
> Dear one,
>
> Our Church has been to an era of transformation. We need capable and willing people who can work for this. Therefore, it is necessary that people like you come forward. We know that your service there is valuable and useful. If it is convenient for you, we desire that you come here and do your service to our poor Church as best as possible considering the varying issues we are confronting here."

On 1965 November 5, I submitted my reply to HH Catholicose: "I was in Rome when Bava Thirumeni's letter arrived and I am grateful for all the good words that your Holiness has said about me. I would, however, like to make use of this opportunity to repeat my humble request conveyed to you before, that I should be given atleast 10 years time to work out my own ideas in our Church. *Therefore once again with all humility and, earnestness, I should like to beg that my name be kept out of any list of nominations for election to the episcopate*. I am anxious to come back to India and begin work as early as I can in 1967, but *I am quite sure not only that I am unworthy of the episcopate,* but also that I have a sense of vocation to work among university students, laymen and theological students. If I get some time I would also like to write some books and produce other literature which will be helpful for our Church. I hope that Bava Thirumeni and the Episcopal synod will permit me to work out some of these ideas."

When the Association met on 1965 December 28, against my expectations and without my concurrence, five dioceses proposed my name and the Association selected me unanimously to the Episcopate as I came to know from newspapers. However, I did not have any communication to this effect from the Church officially and therefore I did not respond to this in writing.

At the same time, in the last Managing Committee Meeting where I too was present, there was a statement that I did not have the eligibility for this position and therefore my ordination to Episcopate was rejected and that Holy Synod had proclaimed this decision three times.

I do believe firmly that this decision from the Holy Synod was just and truthful as well as 'Holy Spirit induced.' I am convinced in all humility that I do possess many sorts of ineligibilities. Further, as I had written in 1965, whatever service I can do for our Church need not be through authority and

power of governance. I think it as appropriate for me to serve our Church effectively through teaching ministry and as a writer. Therefore, I appeal most humbly that my name shall not be included in the nominations submitted by the Holy Synod.

What the Holy Spirit witnesses in my inner man is that I am not eligible as I said in 1965 and that I should not be elevated to Episcopate. I shall be pleased to serve our Church as a priest until such time God permits me. If I can be relieved of my administrative tasks at the Seminary, I can spend more time teaching and writing. I appeal before Holy Synod to look at this and be kind enough to consider as early as possible.

Humble servant in Christ,

Paul Varghese Kasheesho

Kottayam
1974 July 6.

A sizeable section of the believers of the Church and many among the leadership were of the opinion that the elevation of Fr Paul Varghese to Episcopate would contribute substantially towards the spiritual growth of our Church. Many people sent messages to him through letters and even personally. Fr O C Kuriakose, a native of Thalakkodu wrote to Fr Paul Varghese, "Malankara Church as a whole chose you to the Episcopate. The last Managing Committee decided to ordain you and Fr M V George immediately. Now, I hear from many people that you are not willing to become an Episcopa. Those who perceive global developments the right way understand that you have grown far above a Metropolitan in the Christian world; yet, our Church needs someone of your stature as a Metropolitan. The Church wants you to take up that cross. If you are not keen on administrative responsibilities, you can think of forsaking that; but, if you are not inclined to accept the role of leading this Church, the future of this Church is in doldrums. I beseech before you most humbly that you should not discard this Divine call."

Malankara Association that met at Niranam on 1974 October 2 unanimously chose Fr Paul Varghese along with four others to the

Episcopate. Daniel Mar Philoxenos conferred him the order of a Ramban on 1975 February 15. He accepted the name of the noble monastic father Paulos as a Dayaro member. On February 16, HH Baselius Augen I Catholicose ordained Paulos Ramban as a Metropolitan at Niranam St Mary's Orthodox Church as 'Paulos Mar Gregorios.'

The Metropolitan explains some of the reasons for bowing his head to the Divine call to Episcopate: "It is true that some of our members in and around Kolencherry said that they would not stand with the Catholicate side if I declined to be a Metropolitan. This was an important factor in my decision. Pailypillai and Chackopillai along with few others told me that it was comfortable for them to be in this Church if they had a Metropolitan in whom they had confidence. I took this seriously. In addition, many others advised me that my taking over the position of a Metropolitan would be good for the Church at that stage. I accepted that also."

Does Your Grace feel that such a decision went wrong?

"I do not feel sorry about decisions. I took a decision then; I was prepared to confront all the consequences thereof when I decided so. I was aware that there were issues and that there were many lacunae within the Church. I took that decision and served for twenty years based on that. I have no regrets that I made a wrong decision."

Metropolitan explained to the students of the Seminary during classes about the 'fear complex' to accept the position of Metropolitan. HG explained the circumstances he decided to accept the position. These were the words came out of the mouth of HG quite innocently: "When I think more of the most important responsibility of a Metropolitan, I feel sad. I tried my best not to become a Metropolitan; but I could not succeed. At the end, our members from the Northern areas blackmailed me to become Metropolitan; they misguided me, perhaps. When the disputes within our Church were very hot in 1974, the Association selected me for a second time. Then I told them that I am not interested in this position and that I would continue as a priest. Then a delegation from the Northern areas came to me and said, "The chances are that our Church is going to be split; if you are

not accepting the position of Metropolitan, we are joining the Patriarch's side." By this, they blackmailed me. It was then, I concurred to become a Metropolitan. When I think of the tasks of a Metropolitan, I feel sacred. To be a Bishop is to be the presence of Christ in the midst of people. One needs such spiritual qualities. One needs to pray like that. Prayer is the most important quality. A Metropolitan should possess qualities of prayer and spirituality."

"It is a symbol of integrity of the Church that the Holy Episcopate is available in the vicinity of believers indicating presence of Jesus Christ. I was a failure in this dimension. In the first place, I was a failure in keeping relationship with the believers. I was a failure in the quality of my life. That is what a Bishop has to be, a man who knows God, lives for God, praise for his people all the time. The High Priest Aaron had 'Breast Plates' with twelve stones affixed on it. Each stone has the name of one tribe engraved on it. When Aaron stood before the presence of God, he should have all these twelve tribes in his mind. That is the Bishop's job. He constantly stands in the presence of God bearing all the burdens of his people. Through this, Prudential Grace flows intermittently to the Church; this is the most important characteristic of Eastern Churches. The authority of Metropolitans or priests is not so important. The important factor in the Eastern Churches right from the beginning is the Holiness of Metropolitans, prayers of Metropolitans, affection and communion of Metropolitans towards the believers. Once there is any dilution in these, problems crops up inside the Church. These lacunae are there today. Similarly, Holy Qurbana also is a centralized mystery. Experiencing presence of God in Holy Qurbana and taking part in that mystery are far more important than learning Theology."

"Kallasseril Bava (HH Baselius Geevarghese II Catholicose) was a Metropolitan whom I respected most. He was a spiritual man to the core. Once HH made entry into the Holy Altar, we realize that HH sees God. HH was extremely conscious that he was standing before God. He was a Metropolitan who led a Holy life aware of presence of God. Secondly, I had great regards and respect for Pampady Thirumeni. His Grace was a man of prayer. May be, he lacked in scholarship. His Grace was an epitome of humility. I do

have great respect for His Grace, a real Spiritual man of prayer. For the right progress of our Church, we must have Metropolitans like these. On the other hand, the notion that Metropolitans are symbols of power and authority, have established lots of institutions, have constructed many buildings (I too have constructed a few buildings) are all senseless. These do not stand as their positives. When they stand before God at the end, there would not be any queries about the number of buildings constructed. The main thing is your spiritual life must be a life of prayer for all the community and you must be a symbol of the presence of Christ. Life of Metropolitans must be such that the believers feel presence of Christ in them. Priests also should be partakers in this experience. Believers must have the feeling of Christ when they see a priest. This is very important. When there are priests and Metropolitans possessing Holiness and love, Church progresses. Church can have no progress with buildings, money or structure. Spiritual quality is what counts."

Paulos Mar Gregorios respected and regarded Mylapra Mathews Ramban very high. Metropolitan had written about Ramban, "I value Mylapra Mathews Ramban very high; he lived 48 years as a Ramban with no ambitions to occupy higher positions; he spent his days in silent meditation and solitude; his experiencing love of God made him rise to the stature of an unknown saint. I respect him a lot. He had great affection for me. The writings in his own hand coming to about 5,000 pages symbolize the nobility of this glorious life.

Despite being a monk and living in solitude, he gave importance to community prayers and Holy Qurbana. Among the characteristics of a good monk, the most important ones are immeasurable humility and unblemished, childlike purity. In these two, Ramban was not behind anyone. He did not have an opportunity to learn humility and other qualities disciplined to a master, but he mastered humility and purity on his own. From my acquaintance with him, I can vouch that his mind was unblemished. The reason for my high regards and respects to him was this purity and humility he had along with his habit of incessant prayer."

Mar Gregorios wrote to his friends in 1975 about his elevation to Episcopate and his proposed activities:

"It is ages since I wrote to my friends. I am glad for this opportunity to renew contact and give some news.

On February 15th, 1975 I took my vows as a monk, and was given the monastic habit as Hieromonk Paulos. On the 16th I was consecrated as a Metropolitan Bishop in the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East, by laying on of hands by the Holy Episcopal Synod, presided over by His Holiness Catholicos Baselius Augen I. I had been elected to the episcopate by unanimous vote of our Church Association (about 3000 delegates) in December 1965 and also again in October 1974.

My new name as bishop is Gregorios Since the Syrian custom is to call all bishops by honorific *Mar*, I will be known as Bishop Paulos Mar Gregorios. I will not use my old name (Paul Verghese) any longer, except where legally necessary.

There has been no decision as yet about my episcopal assignment. It is hoped that I will be allowed to continue as Principal of the Seminary. My colleague and Vice Principal Fr. M. V. George was also consecrated as Bishop Geevargis Mar Eustathius, and another faculty colleague Revd. Dr. K. C. Thomas as Bishop Thomas Mar Makarios. These two colleagues may sooner or later leave the faculty to assume to diocesan responsibilities.

I hope to continue to maintain at least some of my international contacts and activities. My style of life will, however, has to be more ecclesiastical monastic, and therefore less adapted to "conferencing."

My church has been going through some very difficult times. The responsibility of a bishop in this Church now is quite heavy and onerous. I do not have the gifts or the discipline necessary for my office. I need your prayers very badly.

We are now in Lent Looking forward to the feast of the Risen Lord. The world also seems to be vaguely waiting for some form of ressurrection life, life that is not threatened by death. We are in a time of upheaval, when dominant civiliza-

tions suffer the pangs of death and new ones are in pains to be born. No civilization comes to birth without a strong spiritual urge. It is the generation of this spiritual power through a proper community discipline that looks the first priority to me. We must look for that community and that discipline.

I have reduced much of my activities, since they are unconducive to discipline. This year; for example, my tentative programme has the following trips outside India:

February - Singapore, March - Crete, April - Geneva. Sofia & Budapest. July - U.S.A. and Canada, August - Mexico City, September - Malaysia & Italy, November - December - Kenya, Africa.

How will I ever get the strength to pull myself out of every thing, in order to discipline myself?

I need your prayers, your affection your care and your communications.

Yours in Christ's Service.

Paulos Gregorios

The leadership of Malankara Orthodox Church divided its 'Outside Kerala Diocese' into three as Delhi, Madras and Bombay Dioceses. Delhi Diocese had parishes from the states of Rajasthan, Haryana, UP, Punjab, Delhi, HP and J&K and parishes on the West side of Rewa - Jabalpur Trunk Road in MP including St Mary's Orthodox Church at Rewa. The Circular 58/76 of 1976 March 27 of HH Baselius Mar Thoma Mathews I Catholicose proclaimed formation of the Delhi Diocese. Later, parishes in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ethiopia, London, Zambia, Nigeria and West Germany also became part of Delhi Diocese. Circular 56/76 of 1976 March 27 of HH Baselius Mar Thoma Mathews I Catholicose appointed Paulos Mar Gregorios as the Metropolitan of Delhi Diocese. Following this, Metropolitan took over as the shepherd of Delhi Diocese officially. The *Sunthroniso* service of Mar Gregorios, ritual of the believers accepting their shepherd, took place on 1976 July 11 at Safdarjung St Mary's Orthodox Church, New Delhi. During this service, Metropolitan delivered a

sermon under the title, 'The Glory and The Burden', was very impressive. Relevant parts of that sermon are here:

"You have pronounced me worthy. I know I am unworthy. God knows that too. Yet He it is who alone can make me worthy to be a Good Shepherd and a blameless High Priest for the little flock, standing in the place of Christ in their midst, serving them, suffering for them, praying for them, willing to lay down my life for them as my Master was for me. ...

The High Priest stands in the place of Christ, the only true High Priest, who continually stands in the presence of God, as one of us, as our mediator and Intercessor. It is His glory that the earthly High Priest the Bishop represents. So our tradition stipulates that at the Alter the bishop stands resplendently vested, while outside he should wear the simple garb of a monk. The beauty and glory of the High Priest at the alter is the reflection of the beauty and glory of Christ the High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for all of us, which means also for the bishops. ...

The resplendent vestments of the bishop are thus a reminder of the high standards expected of him. This very high standard is the main reason why I asked twelve years ago to be excused from this responsibility. I have too high a notion of the episcopate to covet it for myself. In fact I have even now a dread for my own position and of what the Lord expects from me. I have bowed before God's call with fear and trembling.

No one can step into this office with anything like confidence in this own powers. The Grace of my Lord and the prayers of my people - these are the two things in which I have confidence. Trusting in His infinite grace, without which I am nothing and in your generous prayers without which I cannot be sustained, I today accept this Cathedra - this throne of God on which He has seated me.

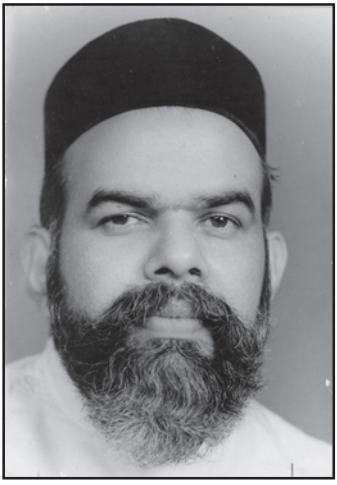
Permit me to say one word about the responsibilities of a bishop also as a civic leader of his people. The bishop cannot afford to be a pure monk, completely detached from the affairs of the world and of the nation. I trust in God to continue in my world-wide ministry to the whole of humanity, in that concern of Christ's for the welfare of all

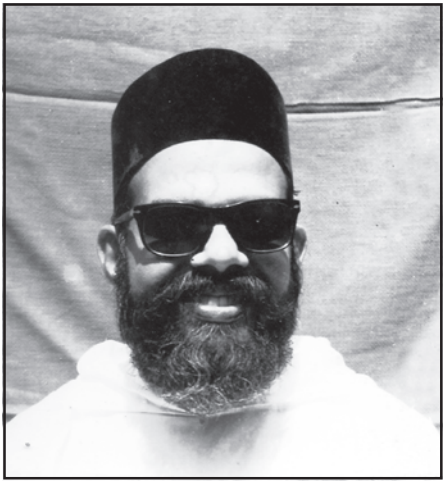
humankind, but especially for the oppressed, the downtrodden, and the victims of aggression and exploitation. Thus I will continue to be concerned for example for the blacks in Southern Africa, the American Indians in the U.S.A., and the poor of the world especially in Latin America, Africa and Asia, In this country I am committed to the cause of the poor and the exploited masses. Their walfare I regard as the welfare of my country. I stand committed to the cause of justice - justice for the poor and the oppressed. Therefore, I stand for an economy in which the means of production are owned and controlled by the common people - not by a few people nor necessarily by the Government. I stand for a people's movement, a movement not so much of protest, as of production and distribution, of social education and of cultural creativity without enslavement to consumerism greed and selfishment I stand for a nation that is free from outside control, in which the people can participate in the making of major decisions affecting them, and in which the masses themselves punish and reform the social offenders - the smugglers, the blackmarketers, the givers and takers of bribes, the peddlers of influence the misusers of power.

To accede to this Cathedra in our national capital in some sense also to accept a responsibility to the nation, to be its servant as well. I shall be vigilant where the interests of the people are concerned, and shall seek to speak to the nation about righteousness and peace. I should be at the disposal of the leaders of my people to serve in any cause that is in the interests of the people of this land.

I shall also place myself at the disposal of the wider Christian fellowship in this land - Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. Whenever the Churches are at the service of the people, I should make myself available to share small part of the joyous burden of that service. I hope also to be able to use my modest gifts as a teacher, in a way that benefits Christians and others in our national Capital.

I hope also to be part of the intellectual or academic community in this city and nation. I am interested not only in national planning as it is now done, but also in re-thinking national goals and in devising new national policies to attain the revised goals. I have an interest in culture





Fr. Paul Varghese and Fr. K. K. Mathews (Mar Barnabas) at Orthodox Seminary Chapel.

- in music and art, in drama and architecture, in painting and sculpture, in philosophy and literary criticism. I want to be part of the cultural life also of this city.

I wish I could, to do justice to all these interests, reside here in this capital city for 12 months in the year. But since I would continue to hold responsibility for the External Affairs of our Church and for Theological Education, I would still have to spend a good share of my time near the Headquarters of our Church in Kottayam. But it is my hope that as time goes on, I can increase the period of my presence and the range of my involvement in the national Capital."

Here we have the first Circular Mar Gregoriose sent to parishes on taking over as the Diocese Metropolitan (No 1/76):

> "Blessings to all the clergy and parish members of our Delhi Diocese,
>
> Dear ones in our Lord,
>
> After taking over the reins Delhi Diocese, this is my first general Circular to all of you. *Sunthroneeso* service went on beautifully in the abundant mercy of God and with the cooperation of all of you. Delhi parish members took care of all responsibilities and met the expenses also for which they deserve praises. The Almighty reward them. Representatives from almost all the parishes of Delhi Diocese attended the service following the directives contained in the Circular of HH Catholicose. I offer my sincere thanks to all.
>
> After the service, HH The Catholicose our respectable Metropolitans Mar Theophilose, Mar Theodosius and Mar Osthathiose along with me paid a visit to our Prime Minister and offered our regards to her, about which there were newspaper reports. Being an Indian Church, it is necessary for us to be in liaison with political authorities of our nation. At the capital city, we should have a 'Church Home' where the Metropolitan and a few priests should stay and serve. We know the hard work and sacrifices behind building up a church for us in Delhi. Likewise, it is necessary that we should have our

own churches in cities like Kanpur, Faridabad, Lucknow, Ambala, Allahabad and such main centers. Along with that, there must be 'Diocese Home' also and efforts must commence immediately. If God wills, these can happen shortly. I know, your prayers and cooperation are with me in all these endeavors. I wish, these should not be a burden to you.

You have accepted me, who am weak and meek, as your shepherd and High Priest. As of now, our Diocese has about thirty congregations and six priests. To manage the affairs somewhat decently, we need at least four or five priests more. We have to start parishes at more places. It is not easy to get priests with a will to sacrifice. There are also difficulties to ensure proper care to priests who come forward. Considering all these aspects, let us move on in total submission to God.

Dear ones, I earnestly desire to come to you all and meet you in person; but I may not have enough time this year. I am travelling to Europe on August 6. I have more than ten conferences to take part and many more committee meetings to attend. All these assignments are Church related. I expect to return by mid October. I seek your prayers that our activities meet with success by God's Grace though I am a weak instrument in His hand. These meetings are in different countries such as Switzerland, Greece, Austria, Romania, France, again Switzerland, Russia, Armenia, Bulgaria, again Romania, Hungary and East Germany. I have continuous engagements for two months including Saturdays and Sundays with virtually no break.

I look forward to each one of you to pray incessantly for our Diocese and our parishes to surge forward with Prudential Blessings. Let our Omniscient God, the source of everything, the source of abundant love and mercy, shower His blessings on each one of you, your families, your tiny tots and all your kith and kin.

1976 July 28,
Old Seminary, Kottayam

Mar Gregorios occupied a building attached with St Mary's Orthodox Church, Safdarjung. His Grace commenced from zero with that circular appointing him as the Metropolitan of Delhi Diocese and with the list of few parishes. A person who knew Mar Gregorios closely narrates two incidents of those days: "This happened during the early days of His Grace started staying at Delhi. One day, I saw HG commuting in a cycle rickshaw with a broom in on one hand and a bag of vegetables in the other. On another occasion, I saw HG waiting at a bus stop carrying vegetables in a small bag." Both these incidents reveal one thing. Though a Metropolitan, His Grace had the ability to come down to the lowest level and live like a common person.

Fr C G Mathew who was in the staff rolls of Christian Medical College, Ludhiana recalls the first visit Mar Gregorios made to Ludhiana after taking over the Diocese of Delhi: "His Grace travelled from Delhi to Ludhiana in a bus despite the length of the journey. His return too was by bus. That journey was one HG never forgot in life; occasionally, HG used to remind me that incident. The journey was so troublesome. Yet, HG appeared pleasant with joy and enthusiasm coupled with deep love for the Church; this made me understand His Grace's humility and affection. HG travelled with the pleasant feelings of seeing his flock in Ludhiana. This made me know him closely and love him a lot; HG became a personality whom I adored."

The Metropolitan initiated steps to commence construction of a Head Quarters (Delhi Orthodox Centre) for Delhi Diocese, but its inauguration was only in 1984. This centre reveals the architectural insights of HG, which looks very attractive. Orthodox Centre at Delhi, the Sophia Centre and Sruthy at the Old Seminary complex at Kottayam and the renovated Church at Parumala witness the deep interest Mar Gregorios had in Eastern architectural niceties.

The then Vice President R Venketaraman inaugurated Delhi Orthodox Centre on 1984 November 25. Along with this, the inauguration of the activities of Sarva Dharma Nilayam, Neethi Shanthi Kendra, Sophia Society and Meditation Centre also took place, which were the outcome of Metropolitan's vision for the future.

In the letter of invitation for the inauguration, Metropolitan narrated

his vision about this centre:

"A long - Cherished dream, the opening of the Centre marks the first step in relating, in a practical and positive way, the life and faith of the Orthodox Christian community in the capital and the north of India to the other religions of the country as well as to the social realities of the people. The Centre is specifically designed to fulfil this aspiration.

The Centre has a number of wings:

- the Sarva Dharma Nilaya: a home for all faiths;
- the Delhi Dhyan Mandir: a meditation room open to all;
- the Niti Santikendra: a centre for justice and peace initiatives;
- a training centre in social development work for religious and lay people;
- the Sophia Society: a registered body to promote studies and actions for national unity, social education, community health, development, peace and justice leading towards the ideal of an enlightened society.

The Centre has, among other facilities, conference rooms and a specialised library.

The St. Thomas Chapel is at the core of the complex. The Centre also houses the office and residence of the Metropolitan of Delhi and the North.

In this age of science, and at a time of acute stress in the nation, as we launch on this journey to rediscover the oneness and strength of this our ancient land of many faiths and cultures, we look forward to your full participation and extend to you a warm welcome.''

HG describes his vision of Sarva Dharma Nilaya, an important one of the centre:

"Sarva Dharma Nilaya will start functioning early in 1984 in its own premises in New Delhi. The inter cultural studies at the

Centre are related to the human condition and seek to bring together experience and knowledge in three areas:

- the sciences - physical and human
- world philosophies - Indian, Chinese, Arab, Western and others
- world religions - the eight major religions of India: Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Zoroastrain.

The studies will be inter - disciplinary and inter - religious and have three dimensions:

- Seminars, lectures and publications at a level of academic excellence
- Popular talks and writings by persons distinguished in the various disciplines
- Training programmes and learning materials in spiritual disciplines like meditation (dhyana), prayer and fasting and yoga.

Sarva Dharma Nilaya will have a select but comprehensive library of classical and modern books in the three areas of study. It will be open to participants for inhouse reading.

Sarva Dharma Nilaya is an idea as well as an institution. Its purpose is enlightenment and wisdom. This ideal representes the ultimate fulfilment of all higher human aspirations. All religions and the great philosophical systems of the world share it. It inheres in human scientific knowledge, in poetry and literature and in the nobler traditions of all nations and peoples.

Sarva Dharma Nilaya shies away from sectarianism and exclusiveness, from divisive or disrespectful approach to one religion or another, to one culture or another. Its spirit is catholic and comprehensive. It is open to all humanity. It seeks only that the human race should grow to its full stature, free from ignorance and blinding superstition, from selfishness and pettiness. It strives for the freedom and dignity of all, for peace

A Press Meet at Russia.

with justice, for the fullness of love, joy, and harmony.

Sarva Dharma Nilaya cannot be other - worldly. In striving for transcendent fulfilment, it does not ignore or deny this world of conflict and injustice, where many live in poverty and ignorance and the majority are oppressed and exploited. It seeks to study and change the structure of human existence in history, without losing sight of the transcendent goals of human existence.

In the pursuit of learning, Sarva Dharma Nilaya seeks the positive values of human knowledge and experience in all fields - at all three levels, sciences and literature, philosophy and religion. It tries to combine the pursuit of knowledge with the striving for the common good.

Sarva Dharma Nilaya will not be elitist. Only in solidarity with the peoples can the common good be worked for. The plight of the people cannot be ignored in the interest of personal fulfilment. Sarva Dharma Nilaya deplores middle class intellectualism divorced from the struggle for people's emancipation. It seeks understanding and fulfilment for all through integration of all knowledge.

We need to understand as much of the world and of ourselves as we can through our sciences - the physical sciences and the life sciences. Hence the importance of inter - disciplinary studies in physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, and political economy - as well as technology and engineering, medicine and mathematics, history and geography, linguistics and literature, international affairs and civic administration.

We need to integrate all this knowledge and discover patterns of the whole, indications of ultimate significance, of origin and destiny, of values and vocations. Hence the need for philosophies - there are so many of them - meeting each other in a friendly and respectful milieu.

Philosophy and the sciences are expressed in languages - ver-

bal or mathematical. These symbols are found to be inadequate for grappling with ultimate meaning. We have always used other symbols - in religion and culture, in rites and ceremonies, in spiritual practices and ascetic disciplines. Religions seem to fall in this realm of trans - verbal, trans - mathematical symbols and practices. All the values which we now cherish, as well as most of our art and culture have been produced in the matrix of religion or in revolt against it. And religions vary. They are ambiguous in their effect. They generate wars and inspire heroic sacrifices. They give birth to love as well as hate, to harmony as well as conflict, obstinate reaction as well as determined progress. We need to assess religions themselves in the light of our critical abilities, and to learn from each other's religion.

The Centre's resources will be necessarily limited. We cannot launch an ambiguous Visvavidyalaya, or a world university. We can only pioneer on modest lines. If it is found worthwhile, others will carry on the work, with better resources and competence. We think, however, that the ground has to be broken, and broken in India.

India's spiritual tradition is uniquely rich - eight or more religions live together here in a somewhat uneasy harmony. It is the home of two of the great world religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. It also has a rich tradition coming from Mahavira (Jainism) and Guru Nanak (Sikhism). It has been the home for centuries of the four great religions of West Asia - Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism.

Our philosophical tradition is equally rich. We have tackled all the perennial issues of philosophy in our ancient schools, Sankhya and Vedanta, Vaiseshika and prajnaparamita, the dozens of other schools of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. Our country has given birth to some of the greatest philosophical thinkers of the world like Sankara and Nagarjuna - equal in subtlety to an Aquinas or a Kant. We have made our impact on philosophies outside - notably on Neoplatonism, Pythagore-

anism, Chinese philosophy in general and on modern German thought. We have in turn been influenced by philosophies from outside - by Greek, Arab and Christian philosophies, as well as by modern western philosophy, including Marxism. All these currents are still alive in our land. While philosophy as the quest for wisdom is a dying art in the West, we in India have all the ingredients for a philosophical and spiritual regeneration that can revitalize our societies.

But we want to deal with Religions and Philosophies in the context of the present - our poverty and our corruption, our communal conflicts and economic backwardness, our ideological battles and our pest - ridden politics. Hence the need for the sciences and literature, as well as academic philosophy.

The Sarva Dharma Nilaya will be open to other civilizations and cultures especially to Chinese and Arabic, classical Greek, and modern Western, as well as the Primal Vision common to all humanity. In a sense the Centre is a continuation of the Indian Renaissance of the 18th century launched by Ram Mohan Roy and others. At the centre of our perceptions will be the visions of Tagore and Gandhi, Aurobindo and Nehru. But our vision will be universal critically evaluating and appropriating all that is good in Western thought in both its versions, the Marxist and the Liberal. We will respect modern science and learn from it, without taking it as the exclusive path to knowledge and wisdom.

The Sarva Dharma Nilaya has no interest in a composite or syncretistic religion. Neither would it seek or promote conversions from one religion to another. We believe that each tradition should, however, be enriched and deepened by exposure at depth to other traditions. Our guiding principle is not *tolerance* for other religions; it is rather *respect* for other spiritual traditions, with a humility that enables new learning through a reverent compassion for all humanity, and a desire for the regeneration of all.

Knowledge is power. Technical knowledge provides technical

power. Spiritual wisdom gives spiritual power. Both are accessible to human beings. But do we have to reject one, in order to pursure the other? At least as a nation, as a world, we need not, we should not.

On the contrary, in history, knowledge must lead to action without attachment, to *Karma* without *Kama*. To act is not always to succeed; but not to act is to cease to live. So our action has a goal - the renewal of human life, of persons and societies. Whether we succeed is not so dicisive.

The light we need today is far social transformation as well as personal fulfilment. The Sarva Dharma Nilaya seeks only to light one little lamp, and to keep it burning. What follows is in the hands of that power that runs the universe, leading if from darkness to light, from *avidya* to *vidya*, from death to life."

The brochure released to introduce the purpose behind the Delhi Orthodox Students Centre has this information: "The centre represents belated major step in relating the faith and love of this ancient Christian Church in our country, to the life and aspirations of all the peoples of India, of all religions or of no faith.

The Centre has a preferential option for the poor. It is concerned for all people, but when the interests of the poor are in conflict with those of others, it opts for the poor.

The Centre is committed to promoting harmony among the religious communities of our land and other lands. It is also committed to inter - religious dialogue and also dialogue between religious people and people of secular ideologies, in the interests of common service to humanity, and of the free growth of pluralistic socities committed to justice and peace and human dignity. It also seeks to promote dialogue between philosophy, religion and modern science, in order that all three may co-operate to advance genuine human development.

The concept of Sophia, to which the Radhakrishnan bronze at the entrance to the building bears witness, represents much

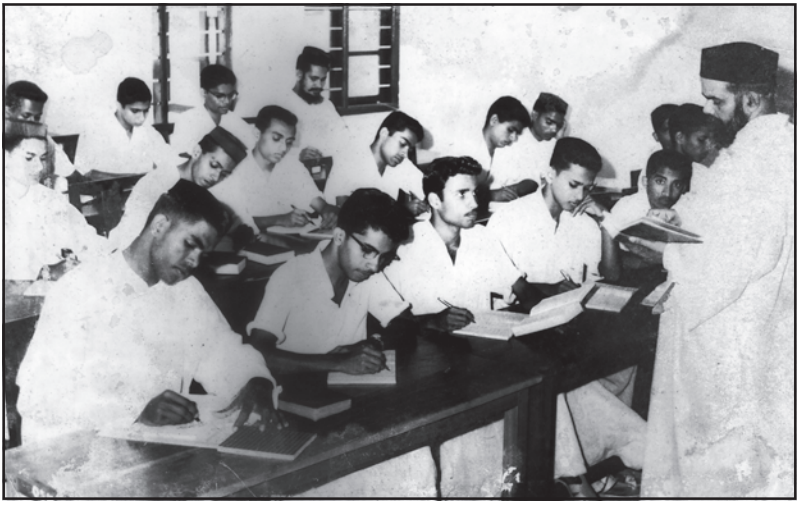
that the Centre stands for. Sophia, in the Eastern Orthodox tradition (wisdom in English does not quite cope with the concept, Hebrew *hochmah* Syriac *hekemto* and Latin *sapientia*, Sanskrit, *Vidya*, Pali: *Panha* are closer, but not all equivalent) Stands first for Divine wisdom or the wisdom of God. It stands also for the whole created order, for the whole of humanity, and for the fullness of the Church. Here it bears witness to all religious and secular experience and knowledge, in the whole of humanity. All religions, as well as modern science and the technology based an it, find their place within it, but only when oriented to the full growth and fulfilment of the human race - not when they are destructive and anti-human.

The other piece of sculpture, this one abstract, but by the same Indian sculptor Sri Radhakrishnan, depicts in its own way, the other side of humanity, groping, struggling to find form, massively powerful but seemingly immobile, looking towards the light but unable to be transformed by it, needing guidance and direction as well as life and form. The Centre in its commitment to the whole of humanity, has no illusions about the nature of the heroic effort needed to bring humanity back to the path of light and life. One finds this abstract bronze in the Dhyan Mandir, the meditation temple open to all faiths.

The Dholpur stone building, created by Architect Sri. A. Katakom, combines elements of Oriental Christian and Indian classical architecture. The beautiful St. Thomas chapel houses some of the best icons in this country, painted by contemporary artists from Greece, USSR and Poland."

Mar Gregorios shifted residence to Delhi Orthodox Centre with its inauguration. The facilities were inadequate, but HG managed with all shortfalls there. One priest (then, a pre seminarian) who was staying at the Centre with HG reminisces those days:

"I reached there one month after the inauguration of Delhi Orthodox Centre. Apart from me, Dn Sam P George was also there. Thus, there were we three only. We had lot of problems there. We had shortage of finances, inadequacy of water and



Fr. Paul Varghese at Orthodox Seminary.

Fr. Paul Varghese with Fr. K. K. Punnoose at Singapore (Sthephanos Mar Theodosius)

electricity, non-availability of food to our taste, lack of infrastructure to cook food as we like, lack of fans to confront the unbearable North Indian heat and so on. We three experienced the real toughness of life there. Having food along with HG with talks in lighter vein was very interesting and pleasant. Even there used to be a helping hand from HG while we cooked food. One can never forget the experiences of love and care experienced from this great man.

One good characteristic I witnessed in HG, perhaps not commonly known to many, was his prayer life. He was a real man of prayer. Without others getting to know, HG remained in communion with God incessantly. We can call him an ascetic who transformed his life as prayer. I could perceive this truth during my stay in Delhi. Since there was a fan in the visitors' hall adjacent to the room of HG, I used to sleep there during summer nights. In the sharp silence, after the special prayers of midnight, one could hear the chanting of momentary prayer 'Kuriye-laayison' (Lord have mercy) from HG's room. I was fortunate to hear that heart touching, enchanting voice daily. This prayer had contributed to my spiritual growth and development.

HG never sidelined hourly prayers. In case could not reach chapel in time, HG used to do them in his room. After morning hourly prayers, he used to teach us St Paul's Epistle to Romans regularly. This was a soothing experience as if St Paul himself came down for us and taught us. These noble gifts by HG were true blessings for me like invaluable pearls.

HG was an ascetic whose disciplined life had its foundation on three virtues of monastic life namely Observance of Lent, Fasting and Praying. It is no secret that these three were the reasons for the spiritual enlightenment in the life of His Grace. Metropolitan used to share these with me occasionally. At the same time, there were people who looked at HG in doubt. Only those who observe Lent, Fasting and Prayer the right way at the right time can alone understand the practical

difficulties associated with them.

For these reasons, HG insisted that these disciplines are for those who lead a monastic life. We see the sincerity and discipline in HG here. He never viewed Lent and Fasting lightly. He was observing these in a real tough way. I could perceive these in their essence during experiences in my Delhi life and during the occasions when I was in personal service to HG at the Seminary."

The Metropolitan wrote a letter to his friends and well-wishers in 1986 about the ensuing programs globally and about the activities of Delhi Orthodox Centre, as appended here:

Dearly Beloved,

We have a sense of guilt and shame about what looks like our neglect of our beloved life members and friends, Without whose generous help this centre could not have come into being. We have had many staff changes recently and we hope to be able to get our main programmes moving in a few months, as more staff and volunteers join the centre.

Revd. Dr. K. M. George, a distinguished theologian - priest of our Church with a doctorate from the Sorbonne in Paris has now joined duty as honorary associate director. His main job is as Secretary for National Affairs of the National Council of Churches in India, with office and residence at our Centre. He lives here wih his wife and two children. He came only in mid - july and as soon as he settles down, he will lead also the programme of the Centre.

His predecessor Fr. Joseph Vendrappilly who rendered yeoman service for one year at the Centre on a voluntary basis, has now gone as Vicar of our St. Thomas Church in Dubai.

We expect that a team of four or five volunteers from our Church, each with an M.S.W or M.com, will be joining the Centre in August - September. They will undertake first a comprehensive social development project in the neighbouring urban slums and possibly a rural development project

outside Delhi. Deacon George Paulos, who took his degree of master of social Work from the university in Udaipur will lead the team, while continuing post graduate studies in Social Work at Delhi University. We shall write to you further as the plans develop.

Deacon K. G. Alexander takes of the centre, assisted by Koshy our new cook and Rikheram our houseboy and Watchman.

We have not yet been able to secure a permanent electric connection, and this hampers our work as also the fact that the road from Greater Kailash II remains unopened. But we will soon be in a position to take care of you better on your next visit to the Centre, with the help of our new volunteer workers.

I myself find the demands on my time increasing, while the physical capacity for work goes down as age advances. I still do too much travelling. This year I have been to China, the Philippines, the Soviet Union (twice), Poland, Ethiopia, Austria, Zaire, U.A.E., Hong Kong, Bulgaria etc. I still have three more trips abroad planned for this year and will, God willing, visit Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Iceland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Canada and U.S.A. Pray for me that my time and effort would be for the glory of God and for the good of humanity.

As I write these lines in the first week of August, two images of events whose anniversary falls on August 6th come before my eyes.

The first is Mount Tabor, the high mountain of Christ's transfiguration. Christ stands in the middle in divine - human glory with his garments and face shining with the lustre of the uncreated Light, transfigured to reveal the true destiny of the human person. On either side stand two other human beings, Moses and Elijah, equally transfigured and resplendent already in the glory that is human destiny. Then there are the three great Apostles Peter, James and John. They are weary and

sleep-laden, unable to keep their eyes open or as yet to share the glory. Yet they see the vision and judge it to be good. They want to remain in the blessedness of the divine presence and suggest to Christ that they pitch three tents and settle down. But the vision fades and soon they are left with Jesus alone, still at prayer. Below the mountain is a more tragic scence, closer to our own reality. A large crowd; theologians and politicians arguing; a man with a son possessed of an unclean spirit; the apostles unable to drive out the evil spirit. Finally Christ comes, rebukes us all for our unbelief, and drives out the evil spirit himself.

In our nation, we seem to be badly possessed by the evil of communal mistruct and hatred; people foaming at the mouth, gritting their teeth, becoming stiff all over (see Mark 9:18), with hatred and the desire to kill. Some of our healers, instead of opening the eyes of the blind, tear out the eyes of those who see, in gross neglect and carelessness as in Khurja recently. We are a possessed people arguing ever, seldom praying. May Christ himself come and drive these evil spirits out.

The other image of Hiroshima, August 6th, 1945. Forty-one years ago, our Apocalypse began in that ominous mushroom cloud. The first atomic bomb had been given the frivolous name "Little Boy" and the B-29 plane which dropped it on Hiroshima was affectionately called Enola Gay, after the mother of Col. Paul Tibbets who flew it. That demon is not yet exorcised. In place of the "Little Boy" of Hiroshima and the "Fat Man'' of Nagasaki three days later, (On my 23rd birthday) which together took more than a hundred thousand lives, we have today in our arsenals at least 70,000 nuclear warheads, together a million times as powerful at the bombs of 1945. In addition we have now hundreds of thousands of tons of poison gas, and other deadly chemical weapons are being developed. Who will exorcise this demon of War, and restore humanity to sobriety, compassion and mutual care?

Pray. Pray that evil may not triumph, that peace with justice

may prevail. God bless you and keep you. Write to us and share your thoughts with us.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios,

Feast of the Transfiguration, 1986

Despite busy global engagements, His Grace took loving care of Delhi Diocese. Here is the occasion of a priest, assigned for parish service after his Seminary education. We have the narration in his own words: "His Grace ordained me to priesthood in 1989. Following this, I stayed with HG for about a month at Delhi. Thereafter, I received letter appointing me to two places namely Ludhiana and Chandigarh. HG reminded me, 'Ludhiana is a place you were working early, right? Can you go there? We do not have a church there. I am trying for twelve years. Nothing happened. Suitable place is not there. We need to construct a church there. You must work staying at Chandigarh. However, there is no parsonage there. Somehow or other, you must adjust to situations and carry on. Further, we must have a school at Chandigarh. Many people tried, but did not happen. God will bless you.' When I met HG to bid bye before travelling to Chandigarh, placing the Cross on my head, Metropolitan said, 'Go blessed.' He gave me a gift of thousand rupees also. The blessing of HG was real blessing in my life. The farsightedness and the wish of HG realized into reality. We received a plot worth crores of rupees as a gift deed in Ludhiana where getting land was a very tough task. Within a year, a beautiful church came up. Mar Gregorios consecrated the church. Building complexes under our parish came up in Chandigarh also. We could start a school also there which is performing excellently now. Mar Gregorios was very happy seeing all these."

Fr Jacob K Philip (New York) who has served in different parishes in Rajasthan says that Mar Gregorios was an ideal shepherd as a Diocesan Metropolitan: "While I was serving in some parishes of Rajasthan in Delhi Diocese, I could understand that Mar Gregorios was a good shepherd of his flock. During a General Body Meeting of one of the parishes, there were clashes and fights between two groups

within. With a painful heart, Metropolitan said, 'Church is the Temple of God. Fighting with each other is not Christian. Spirit of love must rein. Failure in this would cause damages to the coming generation.' While bidding bye at the Air Port, HG said, 'You should not fight each other hereafter.' With this, tranquility prevailed in that parish. His loyalty to the parish and parishioners were great."

Mar Gregorios was always willing to understand the difficulties of others and to give a helping hand to the needy as much as possible. One issue that caught the attention of HG is notable: "While I started staying at Delhi, one thing that caught my attention was like this. For construction of roads, the contractors had brought laborers from Rajasthan. These poor laborers numbered over tens of thousands. One day, I paid a visit to their area mainly to see their children, but they were all working. The children work from morning until evening, but their wages were not even two rupee a day. Nevertheless, to earn that money also, their parents send them to break stones. I asked the parents, 'I will start a school; can you send these children to study?' Their response was negative, 'How is that possible? If they go to school, we will not get the money they make now.' I talked with them for some more time and understood that they did have some problems. As they were engaged in breaking stones continually, the poisonous powder and all emanating from stones enter their nostrils and many of the elders were suffering from TB. Therefore, it so happened that unless the parents got good treatment, they could not look after their children. At the end of it, with their concurrence, two pre primary schools started; after cleaning the children and removing the poisonous objects from their lungs, they got themselves into a renewed status; some children were suffering from the early stages of TB. They received proper treatments. I did this effort on my own."

The Metropolitan initiated a project named, 'South Delhi People's Education Project' for the welfare of these people who were staying at Lal Kuan village seven kilometers away from the Delhi Orthodox Centre at Tughlakabad. This was a village where there were no water taps or electricity. In 335 huts, 1500 laborers stayed there. There were 500 odd children aged 1 to 12. None of them was studying in schools. These people were under exploitations from contractors and

intermediaries. In his busy schedule, Mar Gregorios found time to be with such people who were under slavery at the capital. It was strange that Mar Gregorios located the people of this village where there were no roads, vehicular conveyance or even good enough pathways. Social activists liberated some people here in 1997 who were working as slaves. In March 1987, with the help of four women from this village, two pre primary schools came up here at the initiatives of the above project. They had 120 students. Continuous medical camps were there for the benefit of these villagers. In 1987 October, the project started a Children's Home in a rented building. There were ten orphan children aged four to nine to begin with.

Mar Gregorios in his letter of 1987 October 15 says about the project: "The Delhi Orthodox Centre is now running two important projects under the auspices of the Delhi People's Education Society. We work among the stone-cutters in the quarries not too far from the Centre. These are really poor people. Their constant inhaling of the dust from the stones they crush make them easy victims of tuberculosis. Their employers, stone contractors, exploit them and pay very low wages. Their children are illiterate. We have started two balwadies, employed teachers for the children, give them a daily meal whenever possible, and want how to teach them better hygiene, nutrition and sanitation. We also want to take care of the orphans in their midst, as well as the widows with small children."

Fr Varghese Chacko, who had worked in Delhi Diocese, has noted down the first journey of Mar Gregorios to the village of Lal Kuan:

> "The journey was from Delhi Parliament House to Lal Kuan village, 15 km far, in the Metropolitan's favorite Fiat car.
>
> It looked like a road; but the pathway was full of pits and dips; the car was wavering like the boats of anglers when they attempted to cross over the waves in sea.
>
> Road was very narrow; human beings, animals and birds moved across together; a pig got up from a big pit covered in stinking dirt; some youngsters were running behind to catch it.
>
> HG commended that they were after its meat.

How can one eat meat of the pig or pork that lives in so stinky surroundings? To satisfy hunger, one will eat anything like pork, snake or even another human being.

Car was moving forward. Many quarries were there; smoke like powder covered the atmosphere; varying sized huts were there all over.

At one corner, there was huge banyan tree with a person sitting in its shade; he was the village Doctor; we went to acquaint with him.

HG asked, "From where did you learn medicine?"

"I was a clerk in an Advocate's office."

"How can an Advocate's clerk treat the sick?"

"My brother was an Ayurvedic Pharmacist and I am using his certificate."

"Are you prescribing Ayurvedic medicines?"

"No, I give Allopathic medicines."

It was a shock for me. Just 15 km away from the capital city of a nation of 100 crores population, one person was giving Allopathic treatment to patients holding an Ayurvedic Pharmacist certificate of his brother!

Our interaction perplexed him; he was giving tablets for fever and headache as well as some vitamin pills. These were not that dangerous. Whatever be that, this village was a harvest area for this 'Doctor.'

HG said, "Let us not disturb him. Let him continue his treatment. If we complain and send him away, the villages will be in trouble."

We saw a group of women standing around a well on the other side. We went to them. The well was very deep and waiter was too little. We looked into filled plastic pot and the water looked boiled rice water.

waiter told me, “If we approach CASA, they may help them with a new well. I will give a letter.”

Children were running here and there. HG asked them, “Are you not going to school?”

“No, we are not going. If we go for work, we get ten rupees.”

HG asked the women, “If I open a pre primary school, can you send your children there?”

“Yes, we are ready.”

Two pre primary schools started with two teachers and two woman caretakers. Arrangements were in place for lunch for children. Necessary provisions were also in place for cooking rice and daal.

HG said, “Let us educate them. Once they are literate, there would be some relief from the exploitation of quarry owners or contractors.”

Four children ran towards us. They were having a strange feeling seeing HG in saffron cassock, cross chain and *masnapsa*. Similar to honoring their monks, the students prostrated before HG showing their respect.

They were orphans staying in the village. There were more orphans. Their parents lost their lives because of their hard work at the quarries for long and consequent attack of TB. These orphan children collect the thrown away objects and dispose them to earn a living.

“We must rehabilitate them,” said HG. I suggested that we could start an orphanage. However, Mar Gregorios said, “No, let us not dump them into the dark corners of an orphanage. That would end up in us as well as our nation losing them. Let them live here itself. We must identify a forty plus woman who has no other liabilities in life. Even if she has her own children, there are no issues. We can entrust these children to her. If we admit them in some orphanages in Delhi, they are away from their village atmosphere, their tribal gods and their

familiarized situations; this would cause wounds in their minds that would not heal. Wounds on body can be treated by applying medicines, but what would happen to wounds in mind?"

(Fr Varghese Chacko, *Gurusavidhe*, Thiruvalla, 2007, pp 87-90)

Sr. Elizabeth from the Kadambanadu Convent had worked for a few years at the Delhi Orthodox Centre; she recalls the personality of Mar Gregorios, the Lal Kuan Children Home and the Community of Sisters formed at the Orthodox Centre.

"When I reached Delhi, Mar Gregorios had already started a few pre primary schools and tailoring classes at a village seven km away from the Delhi Orthodox Centre where vehicular reach was difficult. There were not even walkable pathways to the village. The area was full of stone quarries. Fr Varghese Chacko and C T Mathaikkutty who were staying at the centre used to regularly visit the villagers and provide financial assistances to them. Someone from the village would come to the Centre and collect food materials and clothes needed for the Pre Primary Schools. There was a Children Home also where ten children found shelter.

HG had a wish to train and develop a community of Sisters at the Centre. For this, apart from me, three sisters also joined. Our services confined to the Centre, the Pre Primary School and the Crèche commenced by the Metropolitan.

The nobility of character and disciplined way of life seen in HG were really attractive and appreciable. Compared to HG, I was nothing, but Mar Gregorios dealt with me with extreme respect. I never saw him feeling angry to anyone. He was very calm and composed in his talks to me."

Fr P A Philip who was at the Delhi Orthodox Centre as Delhi Diocesan Secretary reminisces the concern Mar Gregorios had towards the poor and oppressed. "Delhi Orthodox Centre is a building complex designed in the Russian mode architectural beauty standing with its head and shoulders high, in a main street of the metropolis.

Rabbi Balfour Brickner (Director, Commission on Inter faith Activities, USA), Prof. W. Verkade (Reformed Church, Holland), Mrs. Hunter and Fr. Paul Varghese.

At the same time, there was a bye lane leading to our Centre from the main road where many poor families were doing petty business in temporarily erected sheds. This was the means for their livelihood. Occasionally, Municipal corporation officials used to come and evacuate them as they were carrying out such business on a main street in a most unhygienic way. As this business gang was causing nuisance to our building complex and its external show, I lodged a complaint with the Municipal authorities. They came to our Centre based on my complaint to evacuate those people. HG asked me, "Why have they come?" With a triumphant mood, I told HG that they have come based on a complaint I lodged with the authorities to evacuate them. Metropolitan was very sad; he told me angrily, "These poor people were here even before I came; let them continue. There is no need to evacuate them." Think about the compassion and love this global citizen had about the have-nots. When HG moves out for an evening walk, there would be some street children accompanying him without proper dresses, with profusely running noses and so on. HG walked entertaining them with packets of fried groundnuts brought from pavement hawkers and with small stories. This man had the lion's share of his life with intellectuals and global giants in international forums, but he empathized with the poor and the oppressed and found time for them as well."

Mar Gregorios was very particular that his service as shepherd did not suffer despite busy schedules at global level. See this communication from HG to his spiritual children of the Delhi Diocese:

> "Prudential Blessings in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit from this humble and meek servant of God to our most loving children of the Diocese and our priests,
>
> Dear affectionate ones in our Lord,
>
> The 'Yeldho Feast' (Christmas) of our Lord is very close. *Danaha* (January 6), the Feast of the revelation of our Lord's Glory also is close by. These are days, we, the Christians have to shed off our worldly thoughts and deeds to raise our mind and spirit to the Almighty in the highest.
>
> Why our Lord did took flesh and came down to earth as a

man? What is the Glory that revealed on the Feast *Danaha*? Is there any relationship with our life for these two events? Answering these three questions in a couple of sentences is virtually impossible. Yet, I am attempting that.

Had our Lord not come down to this earth as one among us, humankind would have ended itself in its sin is what I believe. Multiplication of evil ended as our Lord took flesh as man. These are days of good and evil growing together. God the creator has sown the seeds of goodness. The same God, through Christ, has again become the seed of goodness through His death on cross in this earth and his resurrection and sown as goodness.

Goodness and evil grow together. Sometimes, we see evil overpowering goodness. At the crucifixion of our Lord, it looked as if darkness was overpowering light. However, Light resurrected. On the Feast of *Danaha*, God, the Father witnessed His son, "This is my beloved Son" and Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and dwelled on our Lord openly. That Light in the form of man came to River Jordan and accepted Baptism from John, overcame death and tomb to resurrect.

We need not get anxious seeing the growth of evil these days. At the end, our Lord, the Light would appear in fullness and darkness would move away off forever.

Therefore, we are to live as children of Light. The light of our Lord, our Messiah should enliven our hearts. We should never allow our organs or our inner faculties to be instruments in the hands of evil. We must rededicate our mind and body for righteous deeds to reveal glory of God. We must repent for our evil deeds and receive grace and remission of sins from God.

I have a special appeal for our youngsters. You should not fall into the temptations of this world. Do not go after evil seeing others running after it. Never forsake truth. You must practice virtues like sincerity, selflessness, sacrifice for others and love

for humankind from young days. Inclination for money and enjoyment would lead us the wrong way. Our life would be fruitful if we submit ourselves before God and live serving humankind.

I have yet another appeal, this one to youngsters who have a call for serving the Church or for a monastic life. If we need good priests for our Diocese, committed and service minded youngsters must come forward. Only those who are degree holders from a university can get admission in our Seminary. Again, only one or two have space a year. Those who are interested can write to me.

Our Diocese now has a Sisters Community. Sr. Elizabeth from Kadambanadu Convent who is well-educated and possessing good leadership qualities is looking after this community along with other sisters. We need young women, well educated, God loving and willing to commit themselves to monastic life. Such women who desire to nurture themselves in a life centered in prayer and prepared to live for God through serving humankind and taking care of the sick can write either to me or to Sr. Elizabeth.

Let me offer my humble blessings to you all. Let God Almighty bless you and your family and your life. Let our Lord strengthen you with His Grace and Mercy to stay away from evil and live as children of Light. Let your Christmas turn out to rich in Divine Joy. Let our God lead you in His ways and gift you graces as each of you need.

Your Shepherd in Lord,

Paulos Mar Gregorios Metropolitan

Fr Paul Varghese had started his Doctoral research at Yale University in 1959 and continued at Oxford, but he could not complete it. Wishing completion of Doctoral research studies, he had registered with Serampore University in 1971 as a research student. Dr Russell Chandran, known Theologian and Philosopher was his guide. Fr Paul Varghese took leave from Seminary for six months and went to

Gregory of Nyssa Research Institute in Münster, West Germany. The topic of his research studies was 'God - World - Man Relationship in St Gregory of Nyssa.' Münster was a special University Institute where there were all facilities to study about the writings of Gregory of Nyssa. Fr Paul Varghese stayed at a place where priests from Roman Catholic Church were staying for higher studies after their education at their Seminaries. University authorities provided all facilities for Fr Paul Varghese to carry on with his research. He could complete the thesis in time. Simultaneously, he could understand German culture pretty well. Shortly, Fr Paul Varghese submitted his thesis before Serampore University.

Dr Russell Chandran, who was the research guide for Fr Paul Varghese recalls his experience during this assignment: "I had the privilege of being his guide when he did the doctoral programme under the Senate of Serampore College. He did outstanding research on the Cappadocian fathers. Eventhough the influence of theological education in a Protestant theological seminary was evident in some of his early writings, he made a conscious effort to affirm his commitment to be a theologian of the Orthodox Church. He was critical of the influence of Augustine in western theology and stressed the importance of the Cappadocian Fathers, as well as others of the Orthodox tradition, for the interpretation of the Gospel of Christ.''

Serampore University entrusted three scholars to evaluate the thesis submitted by Fr Paul Varghese. The thesis was highly rich in scholarship. Two among them recorded their inference, 'the Faculty in which I am a member strongly opines that a Doctorate must not be awarded for this thesis.' The third one recorded that awarding Doctorate needs consideration if the candidate rewrites the thesis with necessary corrections.

Fr Paul Varghese was having fame globally as a great visionary, theologian and philosopher. Based on observations by the examiners, the University authorities were in a dilemma. Therefore, to arrive at a solution, they sought the advice of Fr Dr V C Samuel, the then Principal of Ethiopian Orthodox Seminary. Fr Dr V C Samuel recalls about this incident: "When I returned from Ethiopia in 1976, the

Registrar of Serampore University approached me and handed over the DTh dissertation submitted by Fr Paul Varghese and sought my advice as to whether Doctorate could be awarded for it. I agreed very happily that it could be given."

Serampore University accepted the advice from Fr Dr V C Samuel and decided to award Doctorate to Fr Paul Varghese.

Fr Paul Varghese could have submitted his thesis to Yale University or Oxford or any other Universities. Then why did he submit it to Protestant dominated Serampore University and desired to have Doctorate from them? This is a pertinent question. Those who observe and study the life and activities of His Grace, they can find reasons to raise similar questions occasionally. Attempting to find answers to such occasions, one can comprehend that life more and more deeply.

Let us see the view of those three scholars who evaluated the DTh Dissertation of His Grace:

No. 1 EXAMINER

The thesis: "God - World - Man Relationship in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa" is the fruit of Serious quite dedicated work, which deserves to be published.

In spite of what the author says on page 5 ("the basic orientation here is philosophical rather than historical"), Chapter I - VII (pp. 1-226) offer merely a resume though powerful and intelligent, of the many different published historical studies on the subject. Certain conclusions are too simplistic, such as those that justify the choice of Gregory of Nyssa for such a study, Gregory is not "the one thinker *universally accepted* in the undivided church of the early centuries who has been philosophically most adequate and most consistent'' (p. 5). This universal recognition must be proved. The point of view connected with Ancient India is very suggestive with regard to the Plotinian Principle of "the one.'' It concerns "The main burden of the present work'' (p. 98). But on so serious a question it is a pity to limit oneself to simple suggestions.

However, the documentation remains comprehensive and reliable throughout this first part of the work; it rests on the best contempo-

rary research. The author owes much more to the authors quoted than he gives one to understand.

The second part, which treats the previse subject of the thesis, is 7 pages less than the first part (pp. 227- 440).

The method adopted makes it difficult to give a personal elaboration of the Nyssean concept of "diastema", the object of this thesis. In fact, with regard to every single notion tied to this concept of Gregory's, the author always goes back to sources in Classical Hellenism. His references accordingly cover 8 or 9 centuries of tradition leading up to Gregory of Nyssa. This over-wide field impairs the speculative or simply critical quality of the dissertation. Further more, ... the author finally starts to talk about Gregory of Nyssa he usually limits himself to enumerating the usage and meanings of 'diastema' according to the Nyssean catalogue which he was able to consult at Munster and he quotes from the relative texts in large extracts from translations that are not always original. One counts accordingly more than 90 pages of these extracts in this second part of the thesis, which reduces to 120 pages the space available for the discussion on the hellenistic background and the analysis of the Nyssean doctrine itself.

The texts are never really discussed or criticized in Gregory. But the author thought he ought to emphasize the original genius of the latter by systematically setting him over against Augustine of Hippo. The contrast thus established would deserve serious examination. But in chapter XI, the most decisive in this regard, the author contents himself with a very vague reference to Augustine (p. 364). Never does a detailed reference throw any light on the negative judgements pronounced on Augustine.

Now, it is untrue to declare that all the "western" tradition, alias, "Augustinian" in the author's sense, rests on a "false dichotomy" between nature and grace (p. 370). It is completely untrue and unjust to say (without producing any proof) that according to Augustine "human nature is born in sin and can do nothing but sin", "nature is evil" (pp. 384, 445) etc., identifying the thought of Augustine with the extreme opinions of Augustinianism and tracing this idea back to pre-

supposed Gnostic and Manichaean presuppositions. The author does not show any knowledge of the African background on the Latin Context of Augustine, which would explain the meaning of his doctrinal options. The polemic contrast between Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa built up in such ignorance does not bear analysis, besides, Gregory of Nyssa also should be placed in his proper Cappadocian and oriental context. The connection on with origen is viewed superficially and that with Philo is treated in a too exclusive and servile dependence on H. A. Wolfen.

Under these circumstances, I am very sorry to find myself disappointed in this dissertation, serious and lengthy though it be. It would not be possible at the faculty where I teach to grant to the author the degree which he hopes to obtain from Serampore college.

2nd Examiner

Part One

Chapter I: This thesis has practically no introduction. Apart from the first paragraph the two other have no connection with the subject examined. The first paragraph does not give full satisfaction.

Chapter II: The life of St. Gregory of Nyssa is out of place in this thesis.

Chapters III - VII: These chapters are also out of place in this thesis. The material concerning the subject of the thesis should have been included and discussed at the proper place in part Two.

The first part although it betokens research and hard work on the part of the candidate is devoid of organic unity and bears no immediate relation to the subject of the thesis. These chapters could easily have appeared as seperate articles.

Part Two: As in Part One the second part betrays even more clearly the tendency of the candidate to isolate ideas and to examine them separatly which result in unusual lengthy historical and dogmatic dissertations.

Such a method, however can not be applied to a writer possessing the synthetic of St. Gregory. Besides, the object of the candidate is

not to expose separatly the teaching of the St. Gregory of Nyssa concerning God, World and Man but to stress their relationship. The reading of the thesis is difficult owing to the numerous passages which are quoted verbatim.

Chapter VIII: In the 47 pages of this chapter the motion of diastema is examined at great length. This motion, however, is part of St. Gregory's conception of Time. This chapter should have concerned itself with the teaching of St. Gregory on Time in connection with the material world, God and man.

Chapter IV: Here also the candidate should have examined the teaching of St. Gregory on space (creation) in the light of theology, soteriology and anthropology.

Chapters X - XII: In these chapters, which are among the best in this thesis, the anthropology of St. Gregory is developed. The writer should however, have taken in serious consideration the well known writings of S. de. Boer, De anthropologie van Gregorios van Nyssa (Assen 1968) together with the studies of G. Ladner.

It Should be noted at this point that although the candidate has a good knowledge of the relevant bibliography (see the extensive list given on pages 454 f.f.) he makes little use of it.

The candidate has made a thorough of the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa and has a good knowledge of modern bibliography. He has gathered considerable material which he has not been able to develop methodically. In its present form I am not able to give a favourable opinion of this work but I think that it could be accepted after being re-written in the light of the remarks made.

No. 3 Examiner

I appreciate the considerable amount of work that has gone into the preparation and the writing of the thesis. It certainly witnesses to a serious application on the part of the candidate to the doctorate. Yet, I regret to say that on the whole I consider the work unsatisfactory for the attainment of a doctorate in theology.

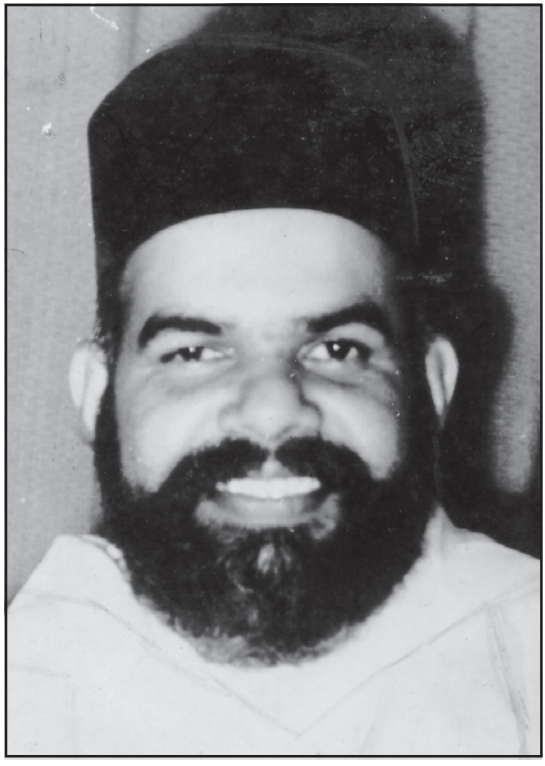
My main criticism would consist of three points:

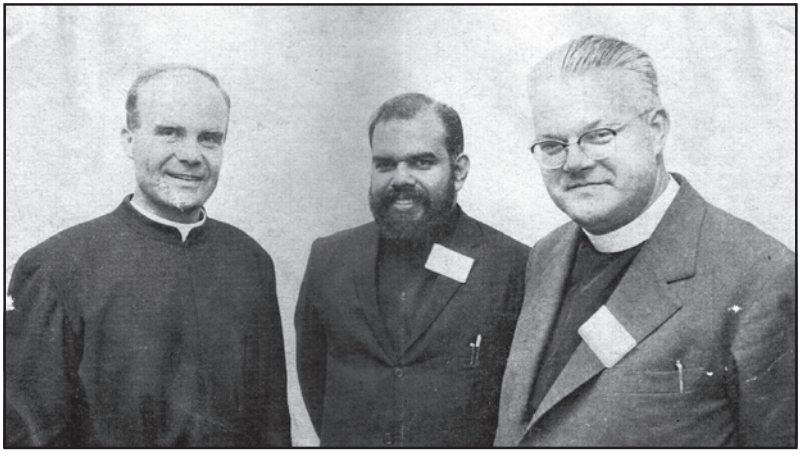
1) the work lacks focussing on the thought of Gregory of Nyssa for its own sake; comparisons with other currents of thought, Christian and non - Christian, is often based on superficial second hand knowledge. This was unavoidable, perhaps, once the author had set for his goal an ambitions comparative study. But, unhappily, embracing such a vast field, unless on is adequately equipped with serious knowledge of the various, authors, easily leads to superficial comparisons and judgements.

2) With regard to Gregory of Nyssa himself the entire first part of the work (Chapters 1 to 7) brings little which has real incidence on the main topic of the thesis, treated in the second part. Nor does this elaborate background throw new light. Much of this first part would better have been omitted altogether. As a result however, the treatment of the specific topic of the thesis in part II occupies less than half the space. In this second part the lengthy quotations of Gregory's texts occupy so much space that little is finally given, in spite of the size of the volume, to a critical study of Gregory's thought.

3) the methodology and scholarly standard in presentation are seriously deficient. Quotations from Gregory of Nyssa are mostly given from English translations, often inadequate, without sufficient effort at scientific accuracy and critical exegesis of texts from the original.

I substantiate my general remarks by some more specific points, following the order of contents of the thesis. Chapter 2 on the life of Gregory is sketchy and partly irrelevant. Chapter 3 on sources and background treats possible influences in an unscientific manner: Hindu thought, plotinus, Ammonius, Saccas ... Chapter 4 on Gregory and Scripture is good, but partly overlooks recent research on patristic exegesis. Chapter 5 on the use of pagan philosophy is good, but the attitude of Gregory described in it being shared by earlier Greek Fathers (v. g. Origen), it would have been necessary to show more specifically what is proper to Gregory himself. In chapter 6 the parallel Eunomius plotinus is based in unscientific approach to plotinus. The relevance of chapter 7 on epistemology is not clear.





Oriental Orthodox - Bysantine Orthodox Dialogue, Aurhus 1964-.

In chapter 8 the relationship between God and creation in authors like Plato, Philo, Plotinus ..... is again sketchy and based on second hand knowledge; the same is true for the doctrine of participation of those authors in chapter 9. Chapters 10 and following betray a grave misrepresentation of Augustine's doctrine, based on second hand knowledge of poor quality; it is this misrepresentation which makes "Augustine's thought - structure entirely unacceptable for the present writer" (p. 316) and leads him to trace its roots in gnosticism and manichaeism (p. 372, etc.). The exposition or Origen's thought also lacks critical approach and betrays ignorance of recent Origenian's studies (cf. v. g. p. 384).

Some more observations: the reader is surprised - given the central topic of the thesis - to find so little about the Christology and Soteriology of Gregory; this would have been much more to the point of the thesis than the long - preliminaries of the entire first part. The bibliography given at the end of the volume is presented in an unscientific manner: misspellings abound; inconsistencies are many; abbreviations are not explained. No tables of texts of S. Scripture, of texts of Gregory, and of authors quoted or referred to are provided. Such tables would normally be expected in a scientific study.

For the reasons stated above - which need no further elaboration - I am sorry to say that in the theological faculty which I am a staff member, the thesis would not be accepted for the degree of doctor in theology."

1. Dr. M. M. Thomas, *My Ecumenical Journey*, Trivandrum, 1990, p. 263.
2. Betty Thompson, Father Paul Verghese Priest, Prophet, and Provoker'' *In*: The Church Woman, Vol. 30, No. 6, June - July, 1964, p. 5.
3. Dr. M. M. Thomas, *My Ecumenical Journey*, Trivandrum, 1990, p. 311.
4. Rev M A Thomas, '*Ormakaliloode*'. CLS, Thiruvalla, 1984, p. 269.
5. Paulos Mar Gregorios, William H Lazareth, Nikos A Nissiotis (Eds.), 'Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?', WCC,1981, p .XI
6. Paulos Mar Paulos, 'Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios' In: Church Weekly, Vol. 51, Nos. 17 - 18, pp, 2, 19 - 20.

7. Geevarghese Mar Osthathiose, '*Sneha Smaranakal*', Gloria Publications, Mavelikara, 1996, p. 22.

8. Z M Paret, 'Mar Augen Baselius', (*Malankara Nazranikal* Vol. 6), Kottayam, 1975, p. 87 - 88.

9. Malankara Sabha Masika, 1969 March- April, p. 4.

10. Fr T J Joshua, '*Daiva Shasthra Abhyasanam*', In: '*Irupatham Noottandile Malankara Sabha*', Kottayam, 1978, p. 314.

11. Geetha Bakshi, '*Aradhana Sangeethathinte Divya Swara Sagaram*', In: Mangalam Daily, 1996 September 1, p. 1, 4.

12. Fr T J Joshua, '*Daiva Shasthra Abhyasanam*', In: '*Irupatham Noottandile Malankara Sabha*', Kottayam, 1978, p. 314.

13. Fr Dr K J Gabriel, '*Shradhanjalikalode*', in: Malankara Sabha Deepam, 1996 December 1 - 15, p. 5.

14. Fr T J Joshua, '*Vishudha Naattil*', Kottayam, 1975, p. 3.

15. Dr M M Thomas, 'My Ecumenical Journey', Trivandrum, 1990, p. 364.